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*Half a Sky*

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## ... CONTINUUM

A constellation of persons or events will have precedent. It will not appear out of nothing; it's a converging of previous trails and persons. Before one set of adventures, there was always another set; and before those, still another set, back to the beginning of the world.

We pass from one set to another now, from the Green-Flame adventure to the Half-Sky adventure. We are still in the middle of the nineteenth century, that most unreal of centuries, looking for reality under stodgy and ridiculous surface.

The bridge between the two sets is crossed on the first day of the year 1849. The bridge is actually a shallow flat-boat canal in Amsterdam, and Dana Coscuin crossed it by—but no, not now: at a later time it will be told how he crossed it.

Some of the continuing persons out of the Green-Flame adventure are these:

Dana Coscuin, the green-shirted *curadh* or Irish hero.  
Kemper Gruenland, the Germanish giant.  
Charley Oceaan, the black man from Basse-Terre.  
Tancredi Cima, the tall Sardinian.  
Mariella Cima, the mountain wife of Tancredi.  
Count Cyril Prasinos, the timeless and invisible instigator and employer.  
Ifreann Chortovitch, the Son of the Devil.  
Aileen Dinneen, Dana's Irish cousin.  
Elena Prado y Bosca, Countess and Doxie, who was also Muerte de Bosacaje,  
and who may or may not be dead.  
Elaine Kingsberry, the English Lady.  
Jane Blaye of Hendaye, and her daughter, Sainte Erma.  
The Black Pope of the high Carlist Hills.  
Malandrino Brume, a rough man.  
Magdalena Brume, the holy panther who is Malandrino's wife.  
Judas Revanche, the Carbonarist who'd burn the whole world down.  
Catherine Dembinska, Dana's wife; dead, but still of influence.

Some of these persons will not be seen again in the Adventures; they have done their work before God and are gone, but they remain in the Constellation. Most of them we will have with us again on the Half-Sky Adventure, or on further adventures. And the list of the involved ones will be added to till there is a whole bright multitude of them.

Watch them and wonder.

# I

## AMSTERDAM AND OCEAN WEST

*Con el Sol, el Mar, el Viento y la Luna  
Voy a amasar una loca Fortune.*

*With the Sun and the Wind and the Moon and the Sea  
A lunatic fortune I fashion for me.*

—Martinez, *Ballad of the Crazy Fortune*

Who ever met a stolid Dutchman? I never did, and I'm older than you are. It was the Spanish, back when there was war and rebellion between the peoples, who hung that lie on the Dutch. The Dutch, and their English underlings, had first hung the Black Legend on the Spanish, making them out to be dark-hearted and treacherous people. The Spanish, in revenge, hung the Stolid Lie on the Dutch. The latter was the more damaging and the less fair.

The Dutch, in fact, are a remarkably light-hearted and skittish people. And Dutch Amsterdam was (is, and will forever be) a city of gay, chuckling, and bright (but hidden) treasure. Amsterdam is, moreover, the Baghdad of the Nights, and all its episodes are stories out of the Nights. The treasures of this Amsterdam-Baghdad are in rich caskets or coffins: some of them are named *Goud*, *Diamant*, and *Geest*, which are Gold, Diamond, and Ghost—by Ghost the Dutchmen mean the mind or intellect.

Dana Coscuin opened and reveled in two of the latter sort of treasure caskets in his first night and morning in Amsterdam. The first night was the eve of the new year, though the Dutch call it *Oudejaarsavond* or *Old Year's Evening*. More precisely, one of the caskets was named *Geest*, Mind, and the other one was named *Geest en Lichaam*, Mind and Body; though it was loaded full of the Count's own gold.

Fittingly this was in the street named *Doodkiststraat* which ran back from the waterfront north of the Ij River (the Nordseck Canal which later obliterated this street was as yet undigged). Coffin Street it was named, and Dana came there in joyful weariness just a little after dark on the last night of the year 1848. He had walked from Utrecht that day.

A gay madwoman was singing, and Dana had been following

the sound. Dana could hear such things at a great distance, picking them out from other sounds, finding the direction of the source. There were flickering oil lamps in front of the rakish buildings of these streets back from the waterfront; only a small portion of Amsterdam had gas lights as yet.

One could not tell the houses from the business buildings there. Most of them were a combination of both. But the door was ajar on the house of the source (it was a cold night, but the singer would not have noticed such a thing as cold), and Dana walked right in. The singing girl-woman winked at him and went on with her singing. She sang in Dutch, and Dana understood the message but not the words. The singing woman was engaged in the pleasant occupation of drawing a corpse.

"My name is Dana Coscuin and I'm Ireland's gift to Ij," Dana joined in the song with rousing voice, for its tune was very like his own tune, or he imagined it to be. His unmusical ears and voice set everything to that one tune.

"*Mijn namm is Scheherazade Jokkebrok*," the singing girl tried to match her words to the tune also, but it broke the tune to pieces, and she fell to laughing.

"Lie you down on that slab there," she laughed in French then, knowing that Dana (tow-haired and fair though he was) hadn't much of a Dutch tongue in him, "and I'll blood and draw you just as soon as I'm through with this other fellow here."

"I am not dead," Dana said cheerfully, but he lay down to rest on the slab next to the corpse that the girl had under consideration.

"Nor was this one when I began on him," she whooped out of powerful throat and breast. "But, no, that is a lie, or a joke. He was quite dead. So will you be if you remain. I make no exceptions when I am busy at work."

"*Nobody* is named Scheherazade Jokkebrok," Dana accused. "What do you do with the entrails?"

"It is not by coincidence that I have the best gardens in Amsterdam," the girl said with pride. "They are the life of my gardens." She was taking the viscera out of the corpse in great loops and lumps. It was pleasantly strenuous work and she made it seem enjoyable.

"There is coffee going in the inner room," Dana suggested with some hope. "The smell of it comes through stronger smells than I can interpret."

"Yes, go get it and bring it here with the cups," she said. "If you haven't eaten, bring bread and cheese and sausage too. Take that basin there and bring it to me full of hot water. And bring my blue towel."

This was a young, strong girl. She had robust fleshy arms and shoulders and breast, and small feet. She was dark Dutch; though Dana recognized Spanish veins in the throat of the girl (he'd always recognize such Spanish veins), perhaps a Jewish curl to the ears, French-gray eyes. She had a round Dutch belly.

In the kitchen there were four coffins with a prepared corpse in each of them, and four more coffins that were empty.

"Business is good?" Dana called half-mocking.

"Business has been good," the girl said seriously. "It slacks off a little now, and I am glad that it does. I believe that people should postpone dying till after the holy season, and many of them are doing that."

The girl came into the kitchen carrying the corpse above her head on her two hands, and it was that of a heavy man. She had finished up with it quickly and clothed it in its best Sunday suit. She lay it in one of the empty coffins, disposed it neatly, and fluffed out the velvet lining a bit. She was deft. She had the right touch for these things. She washed her hands in the basin and dried them on her blue towel. She and Dana began to set food on a table for supper then.

"If you wonder why we are so easily and quickly in accord, it is because I made you up," she said. Dana didn't quite understand her. "You are Dana Coscuin and you believe you have a commitment to change the world," she continued. "You do have that commitment now; I just gave it to you; you hadn't it before, but you believe that you had."

"Have you this establishment by yourself?" Dana asked her.

"Oh no. There is my father. He'll come very soon to supper. I made him up too."

"Have you a mother?"

"No. I was never very good at making up mothers. I will do it soon though."

This girl was mad—pleasantly, logically mad. She had the beautifully cracked look in her eyes. One other girl had had the same cracked look, but she'd had it more emptily: a girl in Hendaye, who people called Sainte Erma.

The girl poured fresh milk and black beer together for a drink that was better than it deserved to be. She had hot barley bread there, and butter. There were beef ribs and pork sausage and apple-butter and honey. Eggs, and more eggs. Coffee with brandy and whipped cream. Sea-salt, white pepper, black pepper, and nutmeg in four shakers there. Blue cheese, hard cheese, cream cheese, curry powder, little peppers, little onions, praling-eels, shellfish named *mossel*. Sea-bird, woodcock, Moscovy duck,

lobster.

"I knew you would be hungry when you arrived after your long walk," the girl said. Haddock out of the salt ocean. White wine laced with gin. Red wine laced with whisky. "I made your eyes too pale," the girl said. "I will darken them." Tapioca and shredded coconut from the south seas. Applesauce from Flanders apples, with cloves from the Moluccas. Brown sugar from Guayaquil. Pies with almond and cinnamon crusted on them. Walnuts from Persia. Mutton chops baked with brown rice. So also did they eat in Baghdad between the rivers.

"We will not begin to eat the big roast till my father comes," the girl said. "When I first made him up I made him preposterous and over-bearing and flamboyant. Then I developed an affection for him, so I made him deeper and more mellow. I aged him somewhat also. When I first made him up he was not really old enough to be my father. At that time I had not yet decided upon what role he should fill. But now he is modified and filled with real affection, and we get on well together."

Dana Coscuin was the pride of Ireland and the scourge of all unnatural things. He was weary and resplendent in bright green shirt, he was tow-headed and stocky, green-eyed and grinning. He was young and vigorous.

"I first made you a little bit too young and inexperienced," the mad girl said. "I will mellow you also, and put new brains in your head. I will fill you out in detail. And if you really wish to change the world, why then I will have you change it. I had about decided to have somebody change it anyhow."

And what was Dana Coscuin doing here, sitting in the kitchen of a death's-house in Amsterdam anyhow? Well, Dana had been appointed (he didn't know by whom) to be adventurer and proctor-at-large to the world. The wide world was his province, and that part of the world which has only half a sky over it was to be his next adventure. Amsterdam was one of the swinging dutch-doors to the whole wide world, and especially to the world of the narrow sky. Besides, Dana had appointment in this Amsterdam for the first day of the New Year. He had this appointment with a peculiar and discrete set of folks. All had pledged that they would keep this appointment, dead or alive. One at least was, to Dana's knowledge, dead; and Dana waited this one's coming with special interest and desire.

"It is only accidental that you are Irish," the girl Scheherazade Jokkebrok said. "At one time I had decided to make you up as Polish. I don't know whether I should change you back or not."

"It has been done; I'm already riven," Dana told her, "I was cleft wide open, and a bit of flat Polish field and of high Polish lady was set into my breast. Then I was closed up again, badly."

"I remember it now," Scheherazade said. "I will examine you again after a bit. If I closed you badly, then I will fix the botch. I seldom do bad work. Here comes my father now. Admire him! I'm proud of him; he is one of the best things that I have ever done. And you too are one of the best, Dana Coscuin."

Nehemias Jokkebrok came through the doors and into the kitchen room; he came preposterously, incredibly, flamboyantly. How must he have been before Scheherazade had mellowed and aged him? Oh, he was mellow, but there was new growth out of the old growth of him like an untrimmed grape vine. He was aged, but he hadn't left off being young also. He was a timeless creature out of some sea; he was even encrusted with salt, and perhaps with barnacles. Or it may have been the glittering snow on him that gave that impression.

"Good Old Year's Evening, my holy daughter," he boomed like melodious church bells. "Good Old Year's Evening to you, Dana of the legend, you who would change the world and do not know that it is changed a hundred times every day. We will sit down to dinner now, the three of us, the three most important persons now in Amsterdam as it happens, perhaps the three most important persons in Europe."

"I've often taken a high view of my own importance," Dana said, "but the times I have done so have been the times when I was most wrong about everything. What if it is the same thing with mad Scheherazade, and with you old Prophet?"

Nehemias Jokkebrok was bearded like one of the prophets, or black-bearded like one of the still-young prophets, and he had a surety about him which even the greatest of them lacked for all their anger.

"Yes, we are often wrong, but we are always important, Dana," Nehemias said with a haunting bit of old authority that Dana had heard in but one voice before—in the voice of the Third Man whom Dana and Brume had visited with on one puzzling night. "The reason that we are important is that there are no duplicates of any of us. It was intended by God that there should never be a duplicate of any person, but the great majority of people make themselves into weak duplicates of others. This is to go against God, and to go against God is to lose importance."

One of the dead men groaned in his coffin. Dana arched a brow at this and grinned with an almost-nervousness.

"It is nothing at all," Nehemias said. "Many of our pieces here



are imperfectly dead. There is a certain windiness in them for several hours, and sometimes they so sound. Resurrecting them is always disappointing, though, except in one case who is very close to me."

"Was it from the child's coffin?" Dana asked, for there was a smaller coffin among the others. "There is something a little wrong about the child's coffin."

"No. What you see wrong about the child's coffin is that it has had to be under-braced, for it is quite the heaviest in the room. You will see, in fact you will receive, that smallest coffin in the morning. Be not curious about it till then. It was conveyed here by orders of a friend of yours."

Now that her father had come, Scheherazade brought the big roast to the table and they began to devour it with a gusto that was not entirely holy. It was as if Dana and Scheherazade had not already been feasting on other things. Important persons often show this seasonable gluttony and they are to be blamed for it.

"I will tell you about us, Dana," Nehemias said, "since what my daughter may have told you is probably from her own fancy. She is not my daughter by birth or by original blood, though she is my daughter by saving blood. Know you that a man who draws and dresses dead people will sometimes have experiences such as will not come to a tobacconist or a draper or even a cobbler.

"On one evening, just four years ago, I had two such unusual experiences. It was in the quiet part of the night, one hour before midnight, and I had finished with all except two corpses on my slabs. One of these was that of an enemy of mine who had died naturally but passionately, of a stroke of the over-dramatic sort, as everything he did was over-dramatic. The other was of a poor girl of the streets, known to my but slightly and only by sight. She had died by a bloody attack, whether by her own or by another hand had not been determined.

"I worked on the man, my enemy, first. I began my incisions, and I made a discovery which I had made only seven times before in my life at this trade. The weirdness of that night would bring it to nine times, and it still remains so four years later. There was something beyond the windiness and sounding which you heard a moment ago from one of the boxes. I discovered that the man I was working on was not really dead. 'Tis sometimes said that this happens often. Is nine times out of the more than thirty thousand cases in my life what you would call often?

"I am, was, a doctor and surgeon before I was unlicensed long ago in one of those movements when papers and prerogatives

were taken away from people of my belief. With my doctor's knowledge, I gave my old enemy an injection directly into the heart. He revived a little, with a purplish trembling and passionate effort on him.

"He rattled his chest. I poured a little brandy down his throat. He shuddered, he gasped, he spoke. 'I am alive, Nehemias,' he said, 'I have been conscious but incapable of movement or sound for all this time that I have been here and you have been whistling over your work.' 'We are enemies,' I reminded him. 'We are enemies,' he croaked in his awful voice. 'Do not let me die.'

"I tell you, Dana, I was fascinated by this thing. Might this not be the perfect murder case? This would be the murder that could never be proved or tracked. Think of another case so death-tight. All I had to do was let him die, and I would have murdered my enemy free and with no suspicion ever to attach to me. No one would ever know. Even God dozes for a brief moment just before midnight, and it was that time exactly. After all, my enemy had been certified as dead when he was dumped on my slab. Relish it, Dana. Is it not a rich dilemma? It is quite likely that I could have saved him then, that I could have had his passionate enmity continued for years.

"Do not let me die, Nehemias,' he croaked again. 'The God who you worship falsely and I truly will be revenged if you do this thing.' 'I am preparing something which I may or may not give you in a moment,' I said. 'We will see.' 'You are preparing nothing,' he growled. 'You are only rattling glasses and bottles. You are letting me die.' 'Not so,' I said, 'or not certainly so yet. I work rapidly, but it will be sixty seconds before I save you or do not save you. Ponder the drama of this in the meanwhile, enemy. Did you ever imagine such an encounter?' But he groaned blackly. 'Who gave you the power to decide whether I should live or die?' he rattled then. 'Are you God?'

"He isn't. I am,' the street girl said.

"I dropped the beaker. I dropped the bottle. And both of them shattered. I was shaken, and I am usually a man of steady nerves. To have two of my corpses return to life on one night was shocking.

"I believe that I would have saved the life of my enemy except for this intervention, but I'm not sure that I would have done it. I had shattered the potion that I must give my enemy; I must fix another one for him. And the girl—I must see to the girl. Most of the blood had been spilled out of her before she was brought to my slab. She needed blood instantly if she were to live, and my enemy needed the potion. Could I save both?

"Besides, the blood of one person will sometimes save another person, but at least as often it will kill that other person. Could I in conscience hesitate? I could not. Hesitation would condemn both of them to death. I was into my own arm with a needle and with the tube that went to the small pump. I drew three full quarts out of my arm. This alone would have killed any other man, and it left me dizzy and sick. I injected the blood into the girl. She sighed deeply and went off to sleep. Whether she died again or not I did not know. This had taken me several minutes. I mixed another potion for my enemy then, but real death had closed his teeth tightly against it when I came to give it to him. He had died.

"I turned back to the girl then, but my own loss of blood was almost my loss of life. I collapsed across her. I did not die, but I had an experience such as comes seldom to any except the dead. For my sins, I spent a long hour in the steep flames of Purgatory. When I returned to the world, the girl was rocking me in her arms. The girl had lived. There had never been anyone as alive as she. She is my daughter here, and we say that in a peculiar way she is now my daughter by blood.

"Did any other dead-dauber man ever have such an experience? Before God, that is the true story of it."

Oh that was a big and rich roast that they were devouring there! Nehemias ate with passion, almost with such passion as he had ascribed to his enemy. Whether that was the true story or not, Nehemias still was not easy with it after four years.

"There are those who say that my daughter here is unnatural. That she is not truly live or truly dead. And I say that, odd as she is in her beautiful and talented head, there is nobody else in the world as alive as she is. Yet some insist that she is the female of what the Negroes call Zombie and Jews Golem."

"Are you Jews?" Dana asked them.

"No. Catholics," Nehemias said. "Though in former years I must admit that I sometimes let it be believed that I was a Jew; thus to make it easier for myself. But in this very year of 1848 the New Constitution has now given us freedom of our religion and (supposedly) freedom from harassment. In all Europe this freedom is now lacking only in parts of the Russias and the Turkeys, and of course in enslaved Ireland; and even in those dark places the disabilities for our religion are seldom death ones. We are Dutch of the Dutch, we are Catholics of the Kerk.

"My daughter does have a curious look about her, though. I do not know, and she does not remember, what was her blood and creed before I brought her back from death and created her as my daughter. She has a brilliant mind, whether she had that before

her pseudo-death I do not know. You will notice one detail though, Dana, if you have talked to her at any length, and you have—she is insane. It doesn't matter to me, and it doesn't seem to matter to her.”

“My holy father, your story of the two prematurely dead persons did not happen quite as you told it,” Scheherazade commented with that wonderful purring out of her round belly. The French-gray eyes of the girl had gold flecks in them, or at least lion-tawny flecks. Her heavy hair had a brindled roughness to it; there are black-maned lions in Africa, and perhaps lionesses also, that bear resemblance to Scheherazade in this. The Spanish veins in her throat could as well have been Arabian (but would not Dana know such Spanish veins anywhere?); the Jewish curl to the ears might almost have been Polynesian; the dark Dutch look could have come from Goa or Java. The round Dutch belly, however, was of Holland and no place else. Dana put his hand on its fullness to see if he could feel a quickening inside, but there was no quickening except her own.

“There is nothing inside my belly except the universe,” Scheherazade smiled. “I keep it there for use, but I don't keep it in the form of particulars.”

“It is in this that my daughter is *gek*,” Nehemias explained.

“My holy father, on that old night you had already let your enemy die,” said this cheerfully mad girl. “You had let him die there on the slab. This was imperfect of you, and it was then that I knew that I must renew and perfect you. I hadn't done you well the first time. I didn't, in fact, remember doing you at all. And then you said ‘Nobody will ever know. Even God has dozed for the moment.’ And you were quite satisfied with your omission. ‘I had not dozed,’ I said then. ‘I had not looked away. I never doze or fail to see. I have eyes that you do not know of.’ So it was that I had to renew you. You are now a much better man than you were when I spoke to you from the slab.”

“That is true,” Nehemias said, “and I owe it to you. You were the second making of me.”

“And the first,” the girl insisted. “Do you understand it, Dana? I make up fables, then I animate them. My father is one such fable of mine. You are another.”

“My daughter has these fancies, Dana,” Nehemias explained. “She believes that the World and its Persons are nothing but her own fictions, and that the people move and act as she fables them to do it. I will say this, however, her doings have always been beneficent; and they work. There was a woman here a month ago

whose whole world had collapsed. I tell you that my daughter made up a new and better world for her to live in, and that new world stood and delivered for the woman. She lives in it yet. My daughter has made up new fates and worlds for countless persons, and they all stand the test. This, my daughter here, has building and healing hands and voice and belly. She will change your own fate, always for the better."

Dana pressed his hand deeply in the girl's belly again. There was much more quickening there than he had first suspected. It was quite true that the whole universe was inside, Pisa and Turin and Rome and Hedaye, Paris and Rome and London and Krakow, all the towns and countries of Europe, all the lands beyond the ocean that have only half a sky above them, all the islands, all the images (including the images that walk like people), all the intricacies of the Two Revolutions, all.

"I might wish, Scheherazade, that you had made one of the things a little less strong, and my own thing a little stronger," Dana said.

"Well of course I will then," she answered. "I have no real way of knowing what you wish except by the pressure of your hand. Whatever you want, I will make it."

"You used a phrase, Nehemias, 'The World and its Persons,'" Dana said. "I believe it has another meaning than you intended to give it. I'm a little-lettered man myself, but I once traveled with a man named Brume and he taught me the meaning and power of words. Now a person is really a mask, an antique mask such as an old actor might have held before his face and spoken through. The word *personare* would mean 'to sound through' in Brume's own Roman. It is by half a accident that person is sometimes used to mean a human individual. But what your daughter really made up for you to say was not 'The World and its Persons,' but 'The World and its Masks.' We have always known that we lived in a masked world. We haven't seen the true face of it ever. We aren't sure that it has a face of its own. I have always wondered who makes the masks that the world wears. My employer, whom I have never seen, makes some of these masks of the world, I believe. Your daughter, I know it now, makes others of them. These two may account for a large portion of the masks that the world wears."

"I worry a little about my daughter here," Nehemias said. "She is a very good girl. She helps people beyond all measure. She goes to communion daily, and goes with a shattering humility. But she thinks she is God."

"I am not so sure of that as I once was," Scheherazade whispered

softly with that shattering humility, and now she looked much younger than she had before, a girl and not a woman. "Now and then, and more and more lately, I have the most curious feeling that there is another mind than mine in the universe. But it must be that I am, in Dana's sense, one of the persons of God, which is to say one of the masks of God. I do create people and incidents. I made my father here. And I made you, Dana."

"Will you make it up that I meet my four friends here in this town tomorrow?" Dana asked with a smile.

"I had already made it up that you would meet *six* at least, friends (and several enemies) in this town tomorrow. But how did you know that? How can the unsuspecting pot know what the potter has designed for it?"

"This pot that is me is not completely unsuspecting, girl. Will you make up a good westering voyage for me to the world under half a sky?"

"I will, Dana, but there will be things going wrong with it as fast as I can right them. I see that another has already made this up for you, but he's made it badly and dangerously, for all that he meant it well. You wouldn't have survived his voyage; you will barely survive mine. But I will make it better and richer for you. Why, he left for you no more than a heavy purse such as one might hold in two hands. But I have remade it into the child's coffin. I cannot make your voyage any less dangerous, but I will make you keener and bolder for all the encounters. I will draw all your years and the instructions for them out of my belly tonight. I will set them into your loins as you ride the whirling world tonight, and I will set them into your head when you lie in your coffin."

"Coffin?" Dana protested. "I do not intend to lie in a coffin for many years yet."

"We sleep in coffins in this house," Nehemias explained, "myself and my daughter and such guests as we have here. My coffins are luxurious and comfortable. You will sleep on lavender and scarlet and cream-colored satin to the smell of sandalwood and cedar. You'll not willingly go back to sleeping in a bed after the luxury of a coffin."

Old powerful Nehemias (himself a black-gray-grizzled lion of immensely talented paws) had taken out a sort of lap-harp which he held flat on his knees and began to play. Scheherazade again poured (or made up) white wine laced with gin and red wine laced with whiskey. And they celebrated the Old Year Evening.

Dana was one of the select men who had drunk the devil himself under the table (it happened in Paris in that same old year

of 1848), but Scheherazade seemed to be taking an unfair advantage of him. She was making up, she was fabulizing an inebriation for him. He went out of his wits; the whole scene became fragmented. Nehemias orchestrated on the lap-harp, bringing impossibly varied winds and beats out of its strings, and there was also an orchestration of events. Three or four things were happening at the same time; three or four different Dana Coscuins were doing different things at the same time, but doing them all in the one symphony.

"Do not be alarmed, Dana," Scheherazade was saying. "I am considering these different roles for you. Do they not go in good harmony together? But some of them will not do singly, some of them will not do at all."

"I must meet my friends somewhere in this city tomorrow," Dana was saying out of several of his mouths, out of several of the sets he was involved in.

"You will meet your friends tomorrow in any case," Scheherazade orchestrated. "I have decided to keep that part in. The only question is with what momentum and with what setting I will put your instructions and direction into your loins and head tonight."

In one scene, Nehemias played the lap-harp very softly, using it only as adjunct to his own voice. Great voices in their conversation should always be supported unobtrusively by lute music, and the lap-harp was essentially a lute. Nehemias talked as few men had ever talked to Dana before: as the Black Pope had sometimes talked to him in the high Carlist Hills of Spain; as rough Malandrino Brume had talked as they prowled the nightscapes of Europe; as the Third Man had talked to both Dana and Brume in the house in Paris. There was a great feeling of profundity here (with actual words, as in all the previous cases, unremembered); there was an absolute aura of wisdom—but there was something else.

There was a phoniness to Nehemias, though Dana declined to give it that name. There was no deceit in that phoniness, no malice, only an incompleteness beneath the illusion. It was as though Scheherazade had really made her father up and had not bothered to fill him in completely. Dana had noticed this incompleteness in other men who had the aura and front of greatness.

There had been King Charles Albert when Dana had heard him talk in Turin. There had been the Citizen King Louis Philippe when Dana had heard him talk in Paris. There had been Ifreann Chortovitch when Dana had listened and savored him during the

days and nights of their orgy, and Ifreann was the certified Son of the Devil. Dana had doubted that even these were real people; and Dana had also felt this same incompleteness and unreality in himself. More real was the Count Cyril whom Dana had never seen. More real was Christian Blaye whom Dana had known in his bare skull only.

But Nehemias Jokkebrok was well contrived, whoever had contrived him.

In another simultaneous scene, in another part of the orchestration of events, Nehemias played the lap-harp very loudly and goatishly, and Dana danced and whirled with Scheherazade and seemingly with a crowd of others. The malesonitus of the instrument now reminded Dana of the strong piping of the evil hornpiper of Hendaye, and the dancing reenacted some of those rowdy dances. This surely was not Mountain Bridges played over again, not the Dance of the Unbreakable Dolls, not Ride the Wild Mares. Perhaps, though, it was the whirl-around dance named *Toton* in which the strong Hendaye girls had whirled their men. Dana, in this scene or setting at least, was riding astraddle the round belly of Scheherazade, and she spun around and around with him. And around and around yet. Had she not said that he would ride the whirling world that night? Had she not also said that the whirling world, the whole universe, was in her belly? But this was not a thing of itself; it was all part of a skillful orchestration. The girl was making it all up as she went along.

There was another scene in that melange. A multitude of men were stretched out on a multitude of slabs, and Scheherazade went down their ranks and opened the throat of each of them with a knife. From the gullets of some she took green stones. From others red stones. By this could be known the true from the false. But Mariella Cima had opened Dana's throat with a knife and taken out a green stone back in Spain. Was the fabulating Scheherazade guilty of plagiarism?

Then there was Ocean. Ocean is one of the authentic masks of the world, and Dana was in Ocean with all persons whatsoever, with all masked beings whatsoever. They ascended and descended, and this did not matter. Ocean contains time and space and countless other categories; it is not, however, contained in any of them. Amsterdam was a city of peculiar assonance with the ocean mask of the world; now, though, the entire world was in that rapport. This was not necessarily a watery sea, as the name imperfectly suggests; it was equally Transfiguration on the Mountains. It was an intermingling of people so closely that they all inhabited each other. Dana's dead wife Catherine Dembinska



was there and winked at him roguishly. The skull of Christian Blaye was there and in a talkative mood. The Count Cyril Prasinos was there, though Dana could not see his face; he was behind Dana, touching him on the shoulder, laughing at him with green young laughter that was several centuries old.

All of the inner company were there: Tancredi and Mariella Cima, and Kemper Gruenland, Charley Oceaan (who had the name of the phenomenon), Magdalena and Malandrino Brume, Jane Blaye, Eileen Dinneen the Irish cousin, Elaine Kingsberry (how could she have known of the appointment at all, unless she had been informed by the dead Catherine's spirit?) Blind Judas Revanche was there (how had he come?); as was the deformed, demonic, indomitable Elena Prado (how had she?) This was rhapsody dream. No, no, it was communion of souls. The soul is the substance that is behind the person as mask. So all the friends and enemies were already in town, whether in the flesh or out of it.

All but one. Only one of the strong people was not in Ocean. This was Ifreann the Son of the Devil. He was near, but he was not with the others. He howled in a voice to terrify mountains and crack and craze them; he boomed and rattled at the heavy doors, but he could not break in. At what doors? At the doors of Ocean itself. The damned howl outside it and they cannot come in.

"Begone, Ifreann," Dana said softly, for they had been almost-friends. "You are not in rapport here. Break your great voice and hands on the door in vain. You'll not get in."

Dana knew now that he was lying in a rich coffin that had been given him for guest bed, that he had been lying in it for some time. Just as well he knew that he was *not* dreaming, though he was slightly drunk. He knew that he had caught the world in one of its more authentic masks, and in a special form of it that is known to esoterics as Ocean West. This was the mask where eels flew overhead like birds and all good people sat down to dine with God and his saints forever, to commune with them in their diverse forms, and some of those forms were pleasantly fevered. Tancredi Cima, for instance, was a scarlet and black devilfish, and yet he was a friend forever. Dead Catherine was an undead dolphin. Elena was a Portuguese man-of-war. But the ocean was holy and Ifreann could not come in, for all that he rattled its doors and cursed and fulminated.

The coffin scene was the most logical and the latter. Nehemias, Dana knew, had put away his lap-harp and gone to bed in his own coffin. It was simply that Dana had drunk very deeply after eating hugely, after having walked to weariness all the day, all the

month. And he had gone to sleep in the rich coffin there as his hosts had invited him to.

That was the most logical, the most likely, the most simple of the happenings; Dana had gone to sleep simply there, and wakened simply in the morning. The only thing left without explanation is that Dana did not waken so simply as that. He wakened with informed loins and informed head; his coming years and his instruction had been reoriented and deepened. A new universe had been spun for him, and it might very well have been spun out of the cosmic belly of Scheherazade Jokkebrok.

He also wakened to voices, to living voices in the living morning. "This is the house," came the voice of Mariella Cima. "Would I lead you four hundred miles and lead you to the wrong house? This is the house, I tell you."

"In here, in here you the people! The one you are looking for is inside. Dana is here," sounded a second voice, that of Scheherazade.

Dana wakened in a coffin, that is true. And the insane young woman named Scheherazade was bending over him. She had, however, a great cleaver in her hand, one that would take off his head in a single chop. Her cheerfully mad eyes showed that she intended to use it, and with rapid flicks of her powerful wrists she did use it. She didn't cut off Dana's head with it, though it was sharp enough for that. She was cutting off his whiskers, and it is a very sharp cleaver that one can shave a man with. She had always used it to shave dead men, and to shave her live father, Nehemias.

The room was brimful of sound now. All the friends had come in, whooping at Dana's situation. They were roiling and boiling and in the happy confusion of being together again. Mariella Cima the largest and most handsome woman that you will ever encounter; Tancredi her somber husband who was a mountainous Sardinian, lean and fiery as the Sardinian cliffs; Charley Oceaan the dapper black man with the spooky eyes who came from Basse-Terre which is called French Guadeloupe; Kemper Gruenland from the Germanies, a giant man in body, who might also become a giant in brain if all its empty places were ever filled up; Elaine Kingsberry the English lady (what was she doing here?—she had a right to be here, to be one of the pact, she had been the best friend of Dana's dead wife Catherine Dembinska). They did make a lot of noise when they were all together whooping in that room.

"I am confused," Scheherazade confessed. "The five of you here so suddenly and so solidly, and the other four here so strangely. I *do* know you. You *are* mine."

"We are yours forever," Mariella said. "I knew you, I knew you better every mile that we came closer to you. We are yours, Scheherazade."

"Out and bare yourself and lie on that slab, Dana," the insane Scheherazade ordered (never laugh at her; perhaps she *did* make them all up, and yourself also), "I know of only one way to wash a man and that is to wash him on the slab as a dead man. And you are filthy from your travel."

"So are we all," Kemper boomed. "Will you wash us all on the dead-man slabs?"

"Yes, yes, all, all."

"We'll go to another cleansing first," Dana said, "and we will all go there together now. The mere washing can come any time."

They all went out the front door like a tide going out. Five streets came together there before the dead-man shop on the street named *Doodkiststraat*, and the appointed company had arrived simultaneously by several different streets. Catherine Dembinska, the dead wife, had come over the roofs and not by any street at all. Even in life she had liked to travel over the roofs.

Catherine was one of the four who were there so strangely and yet were known by Scheherazade. There would always be a penumbra of ghosts in this company of the pact: Catherine herself; the contortedly beautiful Elena Prado (nobody knew whether she was still in the flesh or out of it); Judas Revanche who had been blinded by Dana's hand and knife before he had been murdered by others; Ifreann Chortovitch the Son of the Devil (Dana knew that he had slain this man, for all that the winter raven had croaked 'he is not dead, he is not dead'). It's a dull group that doesn't have its corona of ghosts.

The people of the appointment all trooped into another building nearby. It appeared to be another private house or shop, but Mariella Cima led the way and Mariella was unfailing in her sense of direction. The building was really named *Dood-Christus-Kerk*, Dead-Christ-Church, and was located there in Doodkist Street. All the Churches of Holland still looked like private homes, for the reason that they had been hidden and secret churches for several centuries until this very year. Except the Churches of the Reformed Sects which all looked like public barns—big, generous and with no particular style to them.

Dead Christ Church had been one of the secret churches for a long while, but it blossomed out now; it had even added clanging bells. This was a holy day, the first day of the year, the Feast of the Circumcision.

Then, a simple and profound miracle, one that all the people of

the appointment had seen a thousand times, one that never became old or stale for any of them.

*'Kai ho Logis Sarx egeneto kai eskenosen en hemin,'* so the writer John had described it near eighteen centuries before, and John is the patron of all writers whether they know it or not. He was a stylist! And he had known the Person personally. 'And the Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us'—who else could write a sentence like that?

An hour later they were all at breakfast in another establishment in the same street. There was talk which might have seemed presumptuous talk, for the persons of the appointment were dividing the world up among themselves.

"It is back to the Germanies with me," big Kemper was saying. "There is so much that will go wrong there; there are so many twisted and contrary seeds. There should be ten thousand men to have any effect at all, and I am only one. But I am called to fight it out there until I am killed there. I haven't received any instructions; I haven't received counsel or coin from the Count, but I will do what I can."

"I will give you your instructions, my big man," Scheherazade told Kemper, "but I become more and more confused. It is surely the case that there are other minds than mine in the world, strong minds, and how can that be?"

"We will always be of one mind with you, Scheherazade," Mariella was saying, "and we will always receive instruction from you, for I understand this thing about you, and I will make my man understand it. Tancredi and I will go back to Sardinia. Our miserable little island has been chosen to set the world on fire, and my man and I are among those who will have something to do with the quality of the flame. Spain in this century was only prelude to Sardinia, and France is only a bad-tasting burlesque of it. We will not be modest about our part. Someone may well say of us after we are gone—'But for these two, the world would have been different and worse.'"

"If nobody else wants me, if nobody wants me to go with them, then I will return to England," Elaine Kingsberry was saying with some difficulty. "If nobody else has a mission for me, well my father will stand successfully for Parliament this season. He has no brains of his own. He will have to depend on mine. I will do what I can do there, if nobody wants me elsewhere."

"Shall I make up some brains for your father?" Scheherazade asked. "I made up some for my own father and they work wonderfully."

"Even you would not be capable of helping my father in this," Elaine said sadly.

"Dana and myself will go to Basse-Terre," the black man Charley Oceaan was saying. "We will go there directly or indirectly, but we will find our crooked way into the world it represents. Till this sick man is healed nobody can be hale. We will splinter our brains on those lazy reefs. The colors of the thing are more rampant there than anywhere, even than in Sardinia of the charcoal-burners. God will have to outdo all His past performances if any of you are to see us alive again."

"You puzzle me more than any of the others, Charley Oceaan," Scheherazade moaned out of her burning throat and her generating belly. "I remember all the others after I think about them a bit. I don't remember you nearly so clearly. *Did* I make you up?"

"Why of course you did, Scheherazade," the black man said cheerfully (Charley wasn't a completely black man: he was Irish and English and Spanish and French and Dutch and Carib Indian and East-Indiaman as well as Negro. He was an all-color man, but he was commonly called black). "I'm a fiction, anyone could tell that I'm a fiction, and what lady was it who made all the fictions that matter?"

"Oh yes. Myself. I remember it all now."

"Can you make it up, though, that we get a berth as deck hands this day on some Dutch or other ship that is going Ocean West?" Charley Oceaan asked. "I particularly want this for myself and Dana. The sick world gets sicker, and fate refuses to hurry for us."

"I'll not do that," Scheherazade swore. "I'll not do that at all. You will sail like gentlemen, even like the royal gentlemen you are. I may even make it up that you sail like kings. Come along, in any case, and we will give Dana what has been made for him."

Amsterdam, which has more canals than Venice and more bridges than Paris, twinkled in the bright sun and bright snow of the first day of the year!

"Has Count Cyril left something for Dana?" Tancredi asked Nehemias (for that mountainous man was spooked by Scheherazade). "Do you know of the Count Cyril?"

"I do know of him. I have met him. They are very few who can say the latter. Yes, he did leave something for Dana Coscuin at our establishment. My daughter was not satisfied with it though. It didn't matter to her that it was quite rich; she insisted that Dana deserved even a richer dowery (she used that word), and she made it up for him."

They were back in the dead-dauber house now. Scheherazade

went to the under-studded child's coffin that was there and opened the lid.

"It's quite heavy," Nehemias said. "Really, she is greedy in the behalf of others to make it so heavy. The Count Cyril left a substantial purse. There was no reason for multiplying it a hundred times, other than her natural extravagance when she is in the creative mood."

They all admired. They admired for a long time. Kings have lived and died without ever seeing that much gold in one heap. In many entire nations there has never been such a quantity as this. They dipped their hands in the hard sun-stuff (solar worship is inexplicable without it, and who can say whether the tangible or the distant image happened first); they whistled; they sighed; Kemper Gruenland cried—he was inside Magic Mountain—he was a fabulist himself. Then he measured it by hands-depth and width and length. The child's coffin wasn't clear full, of course. It would have burst of its own weight and broken through the floor if it had been.

"It has a specific gravity of more than nineteen," Kemper said (how could he say something as prosaic as that when he was crying with ecstasy?) "If solid it would weigh twelve hundred pounds to a cubic foot (English and Dutch measure and weight differ very little). Allowing for the coefficient of lay, for round coins of various sizes will leave their calculable spaces between, allowing for its being a very small child's coffin, and not full, it will still weigh two thousand pounds. Can six people carry this?"

(You who do not habitually deal in large quantities of gold coins may not realize just how heavy they are.)

"Six people like ourselves can carry it," Tancredi Cima said with all confidence.

"There are eight handles to it," Scheherazade pointed out. "I made it up that way. My father and I will take the fore and aft handles, and eight of us can carry it, yes. Do give me credit for being practical in these things. The ship is at the first dock, right off five-street corner. All arrangements have been made. We will load the coffin at once, and Dana and Charley Oceaan will remain on the ship. The others of you will come back here afterwards. I have made up packets for all of you, though none of them the weight of this. I have made up instructions for you also. The Count Cyril, though he is my friend and fabrication, needs help in his scheming."

Eight very strong persons—Nehemias and Scheherazade Jokkebrok, Mariella and Tancredi Cima, Kemper Gruenland, Charley Oceaan, Dana Coscuin, Elaine Kingsberry—picked up the

child's coffin and carried it down to the dock at five-street corner and onto the ship, down a gangway, down a ship-ladder, into a cabin that may have been reinforced for it. By the Good Thief Saint Dismas, that coffin was heavy! Kemper had underestimated the weight of it. You do not see that much gold coin every day.

Dana Coscuin and Charley Oceaan sailed that very hour on that ship for Basse-Terre. They did not go directly there, of course; no ship ever goes directly to Basse-Terre. 'twould go to Paramaribo first, but that also is Ocean West; and it is one way to Basse-Terre.

Elaine Kingsberry took a little steam packet to England that very night. Kemper Gruenland hired a coach and took the Enschede road towards the Germanies. Mariella and Tancredi set out afoot on the Tilburg road which should bring them in less than a month through the Lowlands and France and to Marseilles, from whence Sardinia is only a sea-voyage away. The several unbodied and doubtfully-bodied spooks associated with the group took their own ways to their own places; spooks are not greatly restricted in their travel.

The people of the appointment had gone their several ways to play their hands in the double revolution that is the program of the world, that is the most persistent of the life-death double masks of the world. They went well and wealthy, and each with a seemly prospectus.

God was in his Heaven, the Devil and his son Ifreann were surely home in Hell, Count Cyril and other plenipotentiaries were active in Middle World, there was still blood running in all the arenas, but the Green Revolution was on the rise and its enemy on the decline.

And it looked like a fat future and all good voyage with cherry brandy at the end of it for our particular friends.

It didn't fall quite so.

There was the business of a hired coach overturning in a canal, of screaming and drowning horses, and of a man named Kemper Gruenland trapped underwater. This was no accident. It was hired murderers about their business of murder, and Kemper was their designated victim.

There was the business of Mariella and Tancredi ambushed by rifle fire about an hour before sundown, about a league from Utrecht, both hit and hurt and down. They had been priced, and determined sharp-shooters moved in to have the price for them.

There was the business of Elaine Kingsberry in her small cabin on the small steam-packet on the way to England, rather startled when an axe blade came through her door, rather more than startled when three more axe-blows demolished the door, seized

with terrorizing anger when a large man stepped through the remnants of the door and advanced purposively with axe rampant.

Redder stuff than cherry brandy at the end of some of these voyages.

Was it quite certain that Ifreann was home with his father in Hell?



## II

### **BASSE-TERRE THE BOTTLE IN THE SEA**

*Il peut lever au ciel l'un de ses deux bras nus.  
Son navire est coulé, sa vie est révoule:  
Il lance la Bouteille à la mer, et salue  
Les jours de l'avenir qui pour lui sont venus.*

*He lifts a stark bare arm to heavens dumb;  
His ship is sunk, his life at end of turn:  
He hurls the bottle in the sea, and stern  
Compels a future and commands it come.*

—De Vigny, *The Bottle in the Sea*

And that is what Basse-Terre is, a bottle in the sea. It is even said that it is a bottle with a message inside it. It's also said that it's a bottle full of good storm-tossed liquor (*cet elixir noir et mystérieux*) and that the message is to be found in the liquor.

It is truly a bottle in the sea in the sense that it has drifted and traveled with the seas and currents. It has not always been where it is now. It was once in the High Bahamas, in the region that is now known as Crooked Island Passage. It was larger then. Many pieces have been lost off it in its travels. Later it was in the upper Leewards. The British island of St. Kitts has a town named Basseterre, the name having clung to that locale. The island drifted southeastward then. It grounded on the volcano Soufriere and broke in two, forming the twin islands of Basse-Terre (Guadeloupe proper) and Grand-Terre. Another piece of it drifted twenty-five miles further east and became the island of Marie-Galante. This is all to be found in honest legend. It was a floating island; it would float yet if it did not have the sea-anchor of the volcano Soufriere.

It was still early in the year 1849 when Dana Coscuin first came home to Basse-Terre. Can one come home to a place where one has never been before? Yes, of a certainty. It was for this that God put Homing in man. The only purpose of man is to reach the Home where he has never been before, and this homing is often prefigured on earth.

They hadn't gone to Basse-Terre directly, of course; that is always impossible. But they had come quite near those Windward

Islands on their rather rough winter ocean passage. At one time, Dana felt the nearness overpoweringly.

"I just believe I could get out and walk on the water to it," he said. "I would know the way. I feel it in my loins that I could do the thing."

"It may be that you are feeling and thinking too much with your loins since you had encounter with the confabulating belly of that female tale-maker," Charley Oceaan joshed him. "Oh, I suppose you could do it. Being pure of heart, I could probably do it myself, walk on the water. But it's more than two hundred miles we miss it by in this passage, and look at those seas! You'd be walking up and down fifty foot waves for day after day, and walking on water is as wearying as walking over sand or plowed ground. Best to stay with the ship."

So Dana stayed with the ship. The ship went to Paramaribo of Dutch Surinam on the South American Main. It was a great three-master of a thousand tons that had been lately retired from the Dutch East India Company and had been bought and put into service by others on this shorter and less exacting run. Under high sail it appeared as sleek and able as a man-of-war, and it had painted imaginary gun-ports which would once have fooled all except the elect. But it was slower and more ponderous than a war-ship, and the painted ports were now all but obliterated. In that decade and ocean there was no need for such deception anyhow.

The name of this ship was *Vervormwolf*, which is change-wolf or were-wolf. This may also be the meaning of the name Guadeloupe where the ship was not going. At Paramaribo, the ship discharged Dana Coscuin and Charley Oceaan and a child-sized coffin which they had with them, and also a heavy Holland cargo. It loaded rich: cane, coconut, bauxite, balata (this is the juice of the bully tree from which the Dutch had begun to make a primitive rubber), and rum.

Dana and Charley were in this puzzling port of Paramaribo for but three days. It was a confounding and a mystery, a piece of Africa and of India on the American Main. The sky was a peculiar jade-green (it was even rather jaded green); the trees were blue, particularly the Blue Tree; the water was all the color of chocolate. The air was sour, the heat intense, and the grace of God seemed to be not fully over this place.

There were Negroes there new from Africa. They did not know whether they were slaves or not, and their transporters professed not to know. Some of these Blacks were on their way to Brazil.

Brazil had been abolishing slavery (with at least one proclamation a year) for thirty years now, but there still existed *contrato*, a form of indenture. This was in the form of loosely contracted labor to pay for the passage from Africa.

But it was not essential that these Blacks go to Brazil, or to any particular place at all. One of them told Dana that he would willingly go with him and Charley Oceaan wherever they were going. There was only the fact that he owed a certain man either money or assign work. Dana paid the money to the certain man; he paid a much smaller sum than the man originally asked. Dana was always one to insist on fairness in such dealings; he was capable of a grinning sort of menace and a casual handling of weapons that often went to insure this fairness. The price settled on was truly fair.

This African Black went with Dana and Charley to Cayenne in French Guiana in a little lug-sail coaster vessel. The African Black was named Damisa. This name, he said, meant leopard.

"What?" Dana asked (speaking through Charley Oceaan who knew all the quasi-tongues). "Is it because you are fierce and swift?"

"No," Damisa said. "It's because I'm spotted." Either by birth or disease this man had whitish-yellow blotches on this black skin.

Cayenne, now that was something more like it! It had a more human tone to it, a saner madness. The people there were rogues, every one of them, bitterly cheerful rogues. The ribs stuck out of their skins and the tongues wagged in their heads. They refused to work; they refused to starve; they worked out a compromise between the two things. They had a happy and knife-bladed wit, and they talked a French that even Dana could understand. They were all undeniably French in Cayenne: White French, Black French, Magenta-colored French. The fathers and the uncles of the White French had come there originally to the penal settlements; even some of themselves present had personally experienced this transportation.

There was deep revolution in every man, woman, child, and dog there; but they were faced with an almost non-existent government at which to direct their revolt. There were no rich men there to be plundered; there were no fine buildings to be pulled down or burned. It was revolution chattering and crackling in the air forever, but it hadn't the substance either of the Green Revolution or the Red.

Cassava and corn and fruit were eaten by the people, and a little of all of these were exported. There was building wood and ship wood, but who wanted to cut wood? There were diamonds to be

had in the near interior, but who wanted diamonds? There was nearer and easier gimcrackery to be had for the picking up, and most of the people were gaudily adorned. There was rum for the making of it; there was meat for the easy hunting. There was shade from the scorching and enervating heat. There was gold to be had, but only foreign adventurers had come to placer-mine it.

One of these gold placer-miners was a United States man named Otis Ranker. Otis had just heard exciting news of other gold in a more northern country. As a matter of fact he had just heard this exciting news from Dana Coscuin who didn't know that it was exciting.

"You are sure of this?" he demanded over and over. "You are sure of this, Green-Shirt?"

"Of course I'm not sure of it, man," Dana told him. "It is sea rumor only. I heard it in Paramaribo from a man from a Mexican ship."

"You are sure of this? Then I'll go there at once. I'll go where you go to your toy islands; from there I can get some sort of transport to the Isthmus. Crossing the Isthmus is better than going around the Horn, or crossing overland Mexico. I've done both, and I know this couldn't be worse."

The news Dana carried was of the California gold discovered in 1848, and the news had begun to travel by land and sea rumor by early 1849.

After five days in Cayenne, Dana Coscuin and Charley Oceaan and Damisa and Otis Ranker boarded a small French vessel of the kind that was then called *bateau-mouche*. This vessel was going, by great good fortune, to Basse-Terre itself—the home of Charley Oceaan and the predestined home of Dana Coscuin.

And, three weeks later and after only three stops, these four men went ashore on blessed Basse-Terre carrying a child's coffin and other baggage besides.

Four of them carrying that heavy coffin and other baggage besides? Yes. The coffin wasn't really very heavy now.

So Dana had spent a great weight of gold out of it? No he hadn't; he hadn't spent a single gold piece out of it. He had spent a very little bit of other gold coins from a leather bag that he carried, but nobody had taken anything at all out of that little coffin. What facts then about the damnable decline of the coffer?

The fact was that Scheherazade Jokkebrok of Amsterdam-Baghdad, though she was the most splendid fabulator in the world, was still a fabulator. And hoard gold, wherever it is fabulated, will always diminish or disappear, particularly if it is buried or if it is taken on sea voyage. In Ireland it will turn into

ashes or sheep dung or walnut shells or shore pebbles; in Flanders it turns into small pieces of broken pottery; in France it turns into spoiled onions or rotten potatoes or (again) ashes and clinkers; in Haussa land, so Damisa told them, it will turn into peanut shells; in Basse-Terre it turns into rags and inferior shore shells and the refuse of sugar refining.

Oh, there were still gold coins in that child's coffin. There would always be. One had only to sift through the rubble and find a few of them on the bottom any time. There were still as many gold coins there as the Count Cyril had left in a fat purse for Dana, but there weren't the thousands of pounds of them that Scheherazade had made up. The coins may even have been self-renewing. Several years later, when he had dire need of money, Dana found four such coins during a quarter hour's rummaging through the trash of that coffer. He believed those were the last of them, but a month later he found two more, and a year later another. He never was sure that he came to the last of them.

But why mention small minted gold when we come to golden Basse-Terre itself?

Basse-Terre (the town and the landing) has a longitude of sixty-one degrees, forty-four minutes, and forty-two seconds west; and a latitude of exactly sixteen degrees north. These identical bearings have been given (in a chronicle of another sort) as those of the Earthly Paradise, and there is some truth in that. The island of Basse-Terre is roughly rectangular and about eight miles east to west, and sixteen miles north to south; or as large as any land may be and retain quality. Its twin island Grande-Terre is of about the same area but has the shape of a distorted triangle.

Basse-Terre (Low-Land) must have been named in irony, for it is all tumbled hills and mountains, green cliffs, and purple chasms. There is no level land on it at all, and the only low land is the sea-sort which everywhere rises quickly to tangled heights. The twin island, Grande-Terre, however, is low-lying and almost awash of the sea.

Besides Basse-Terre itself, the other towns on Basse-Terre Island are Pointe-Noire, Ste. Rose, Le Lamentin, and Capes-Terre. None of these towns is large. All of them together, and including Basse-Terre Town, would not have the population of a medium village where you come from.

Foci of interest on Basse-Terre Island are the volcano La Soufriere of four thousand nine hundred feet height, the House of Dana Cosquin (that spelling has always been used on Basse-Terre; do not change it) which is on the southwestern flank of the

volcano, the Great Thermal Springs which are hard south of the volcano, and the Grave of Dana Cosquin on the southeastern flank of the volcano.

Dana Coscuin had been startled to find a name so near to his own attached to natural features on this little island in the Antilles. He suspected Charley Oceaan of an elaborate practical joke in this. This was not so. One week later, the local priest showed Dana, in a book printed before Dana's birth, these names for these landmarks.

As for Charley Oceaan, when he had received his own first instructions several years before (these instructions at second-hand from the Count Cyril Prasinos), he had believed that Dana Coscuin was a code name for his mission, taken from the landmarks of his native island, and slightly misspelled as if perhaps to make an acrostic. He had been more than startled to meet, in Hendaye, in Paris, in other places, a man actually named Dana Coscuin: a man, moreover, who did not so much as know that there were places named Basse-Terre or French Guadeloupe.

The House of Dana Cosquin was a high flat rock about two miles northeast of the little town of Basse-Terre, about two miles southwest of the topmost for of the volcano. This high flat rock rose clear above the high jungles and was but little lower than the emerald height of the volcano. It gave a supreme view over a very great reach of ocean, and over many islands and rocks and shoals. From the House of Dana Cosquin one could see the small islands named Iles des Saintes (from their size they were two major saints and three minor saints, but they do not seem ever to have been individually named). Off towards the South Islands was a shoal named Vieux Port, and from the high House of Dana one could see its underwater buildings and old stone docks better than from any nearer point or lower height. These were not at all recent things, not of the last several thousand years; they were very old and submerged megalithic remnants.

From the rock named House of Dana Cosquin, one could also see Marie-Galante, an island half as large as Basse-Terre itself; one could see all of Grande-Terre that was not occluded by the volcano Soufriere. Once could see other lands and seas; one could see various currents, each one with its own texture and coloration; one could see various under-sea fountains and wellings-up, especially that known as the Great Green Fountain. And, on the island itself, one could see the cap-rocks of the Great Thermal Springs.

There had never been a house on the flat rock called the House of Dana Cosquin, at least not in historical times. There may have

been a giant's house there in the old megalithic days. The rock itself, of some four acres extent, appeared to be hand hewn and not of natural finish at all (though of very old patina). But there *would be* a house there; Dana Coscuin (he would always spell his name that way, though his son and grandson might spell it with a *q*, though the Guadeloupéens had always spelled it with a *q*) resolved now that he would build his house and home on this high rock. He had a full vision all at once of what the house would be like.

The site was about three hundred yards from the stone and sod house of Charley Oceaan; and there were five men now at Oceaan's, sorting out their things and making ready to dwell there for a short or a long time. As to the other foci of interest on Basse-Terre Island—the volcano named Soufriere, the Great Thermal Springs, the Grave of Dana Cosquin; we will leave them till tomorrow. No, tomorrow is Sunday when we will worship and rest. We will leave those sights for next week.

The five men gathered today at Oceaan's stone and sod house were Dana Coscuin and Charley Oceaan themselves; Damisa, the leopard who was the mottled black man; Otis Ranker, the United States placer-mining man; Guerchin, who was governor (more accurately under-governor, still more accurately under-under-governor: Le Gouverneur Sous-Sous, Damisa the leopard would come to call him in fun) of some small portion of the Island of Basse-Terre of French Guadeloupe.

"I will be with you if I may," this man Guerchin said as the rest of them worked, making their several trips down to the landing and up the hills again to bring their goods, "since I see that you four are men of culture and travel, and I have a great hunger for these things and the news of them. The over-Governor of Guadeloupe and Basse-Terre has forbidden me from visiting his house or partaking of his company. He has also taken away all my rights and my salary. The only other cultured man on this island, besides myself, is the priest; and we disagree because I am an atheist. We have reached this agreement: for five days each week we are close friends; on Saturday we quarrel, so that we may not have to see each other on Sunday; on Monday we become friends again and continue so till Saturday. Today is Saturday, and we have quarreled."

"Aye, be our Saturday friend at least then, Guerchin," Dana told the good fellow (all governors everywhere are good fellows, a thing little known), "and on tomorrow Sunday, if you insist on excluding Charley Oceaan and myself, you may still be friends with Otis Ranker and with Damisa the Leopard who are not of the

faith. But we will gladly be friends of yours for all seven days, or for seven times seven."

There were other men not of the *mescolanza* native who were there. There were in particular four dark and sinister men who came and gazed at the friendly company. Sinister they were, surely, from the very aspect of them, but why should we call them dark? It is because words are colored. Actually, besides Dana Coscuin who was a fair-colored child of the sun, these four men were of a lighter complexion than any others who might be seen on the island. They were dark inside, though, and their darkness shone through. The dark-skinned folk of the landing and the town, in contrast, were sunny through and through; they had a shine on them.

One of these four sinister men had arrived with Dana and his friends on the little French *bateau-mouche*. Two others had arrived in a larger ship. One, apparently, had already been there. These were European men, but they had none of the seven bloods of Basse-Terre; they hadn't them in Dana's estimation, at least. The seven bloods of Basse-Terre are Irish, English, French, Spanish, Carib Indian, East Indian, and Negro.

"These men are flunkies of the Estate," Celeste told Dana. Celeste herself was light and appeared to be pure French.

"Which is *the* Estate?" Dana asked.

"The name of it is *Porte d'Enfer*. For your life and your soul, do not tangle with the Estate or its men. Particularly do not tangle with the master of the Estate when he comes."

"I knew a man, now dead, who would have delighted in an estate of that name."

"Likely he is the same man, the Dana, but he is tardy in coming this time. And his men are sultry and worried."

"If he is the same man, he will not come—not in the flesh."

"Sometimes he comes out of the flesh. Do be careful, the Dana."

At the landing, girls and women were unloading baggage and bales from the small ship on which Dana had arrived and from a larger ship which was at the landing. The girls were very strong, and they carried loads on their heads that would stagger a strong man.

But were there no men there to unload the heavy cargo? There were men there, big and muscular men, lithe, lively, powerful men of more capability than men elsewhere; and there were great numbers of them. Why did the men not unload the cargoes then? Let us confess it, the men of Basse-Terre were lazy. The women, being more diligent than the men, were paid higher wages; and in



any case, the money of the women was also the money of their men.

"It is for the pleasure of their company that we do their work for them," one of the women explained to Dana. "Our men are the finest and most pleasurable in the world. There are not such good-humored and handsome men anywhere. Why should we not support them?"

Even Celeste, who was slight and light, and a lady through and through, worked at the unloading. "I do not have to do this, the Dana," she explained. "I have no man of my own to support. I have money from my father and land of my own. I do it so the other girls will not believe I feel superior to them." She was a hundredweight of a girl, carrying half again that weight on her head up steep roads of a mile or more. Others of them, however, carried much greater loads. In particular there was a dusky good-natured rival of Celeste, thick and sturdy, who took a three-hundred weight barrel on her head and went laughing up the hills. These were extraordinary girls and women.

Charley Ocean had kinsmen there, kinswomen, kins-children; and they all laid to so as to make all his friends welcome and comfortable. All were wildly happy and proud to see their dapper kinsman returned from over the sea. All also were quickly taken by the appearance of Damisa the Leopard, and indeed this mottled man was extremely friendly and outgoing. Most of Charley's friends were instantly friends and partisans of the dour Otis Ranker the United States man, divining that the gold-struck heart of that seemingly surly man was really golden. And Otis liked the people, though he had an everlasting terror of being crowded. "Be off, you nay-gers," he'd say. "Give me breathing room. Is there gold to be panned in the streams here?"

"Why, why look for gold in the streams?" they'd ask. "There is all the gold you want for diving down to the wrecks and taking it. Why look for it in the streams?"

"It isn't the same thing," Otis would sigh. "Coin gold and bar gold can never fill the heart. Only the gold that a man pans with his own hands can do that."

But the people took to Dana Coscuin particularly, though they could not believe this was really his name.

"Are you a singing minstrel?" one of the men asked him.

"I'm a singing minstrel of one song only," Dana confessed.

"There was a singing minstrel who came here in the time of my grandfather," the man said. "He was blind, so he sang. He used the name of *Dana Coq-à-l'âne* which is a burlesque of the name of the folk hero. We will sing some of his comic songs to you tonight.

But you use the name almost directly. You also must be a minstrel man or a comic poet."

"Yes, I do think of myself a little as a comic poet," Dana jibed. "Do you know *The High Comedy of Blood and Death*? I've done pieces of that."

"We know it in some versions. We will sing parts of it tonight, and then you will sing other parts. It is said that nobody knows all the verses of that bloody comedy."

"Nay, they can't all be sung or known. They haven't all been acted out yet."

"You also must be something else," the man continued. "You must be a sun child. The sun burns most men dark, but a sun child is burned lighter by the sun."

"Yes, I think of myself as a sun child. Mayhap I think of myself as a solar myth as well," Dana said with near seriousness.

"Why Dana, you could have been the prophesied white god come to these shores," Charley Ocean laughed. "If you had not been so foolish as to shave while we still sailed on the *bateau-mouche* you could have come as that golden-bearded white god of legend."

They all laughed about that. They looked at the cheerful Dana who was a shorter man than most of them (this wouldn't have been the case on most islands or in most lands). That Dana might be the predicted prodigy who was blood nephew of the volcano Soufriere, who held green thunder in his right hand and three suns in his left, was itself a bit of comic minstrelsy. Many of the comic songs had to do with false claimants to the title.

But wait a moment! Though the right hand of Dana seemed empty, yet he had a powerful way of moving it and flicking it out that made larger men blink and gape. His wrists were as thick as their arms, and they were muscular men all. Dana just *might* have green thunder in his right hand.

And in his left hand, at that very moment, Dana jingled three gold coins and slid them upon each other. The gold coin always has its value and magic because it is an icon of the sun. Perhaps Dana did hold three suns in his left hand.

"Let the Dana greet his Uncle," Guerchin the sous-sous-governor jested. "Then we will know for sure."

"All greetings to you, Uncle Hot Cauldron!" Dana called a loud and friendly salute across the jumbled hills to the hot-top mountain. And the volcano Soufriere answered by belching a glob of fire and ashes.

They all laughed loudly at that. They laughed as though it were the punch line of some comic minstrelsy. Of course, the volcano

Soufriere belched these little globs of fire and ashes fifty times a day at least, but his Reverence seldom did it so deftly on cue.

They laughed. Then two of them, Damisa the Leopard and the man who had talked of minstrelsy, were singing a comic song together; not quite in the same jumble of languages, not quite in the same jumble of tunes, but a very funny song of many levels and terraces of humor.

Laughing, Dana walked away from them all. Even his feet laughed as they played slippery tricks on him on the mossy green rocks. Dana had a great hunger for this place and he filled it with laughing. He was a laughing glutton for these scenes and sceneries. He walked a crooked two or three hundred yards, taking all the bursting, exploding, many-tiered greenery in with his intricate eyes. Then he could see less and less of it, though the smells and sounds of it came pungently and overwhelmingly. And finally he could see nothing at all except a watery green blur.

He was not laughing now. He was crying, though somewhat joyously. He was blinded by his own puzzling and almost ecstatic tears. The pungency of a four thousand foot jungle permeated him. Then he knew that there was another pungency standing on green-stained feet and looking at him.

"Welcome home to Domdaniel, Dana Coq-à-l'âne," the girl or woman said. She spoke in a very throaty and dusky way; it was as if the rocks of Basse-Terre, splintered by the exploding greenery, were speaking. But Dana couldn't see her for his drowned eyes.

"Is this place Domdaniel?" Dana asked. "I thought it was only my own eyes that were drowned with their own flux. Am I under water then? Domdaniel is the city or the cavern that has been a long time covered by the ocean, and nobody knows where it is."

"I make the *calembour*, the pun," the girl said. "My own surname is Domdaniel, but the meaning of Domdaniel is *La Demeure de Daniel, ou de Dana*, the House of Dana. For *Dom* is the word for house in holy Latin. We have our own name because we have always lived near this place called the House of Dana Cosquin, this great rock. Welcome home, Dana."

"Am I home then?"

"You are home. You will go away many a time, but you will always come back here as to home. You can never go back to any other place as to home again."

Dana's eyes had cleared a little. He saw the girl as rainbowed now, as irised, as every color. Indeed she was just that. How could she be at the same time both fairer and darker than the other girls of Basse-Terre? How could she have always that nimbus of color about her? She had it even after Dana's eyes had cleared.

Part of it was the incredible raiment she wore. "I am a weaver and a dyer," she said to his eyes. "Shouldn't I make the brightest things for myself? When I make for a rival I make a little bit lacking, though better than anyone else could make. Notice the pretty Celeste. You have noticed her, and you will notice her again and again. Notice how prettily she is dressed, by my own weaving and dyeing. Notice also that I have played certain small tricks on her. I can also make the *calembour*, the pun, in my weaving. When you catch on to it you will smile."

The brightest things for herself, actually she had said for herself as if she were plural. The most gaudy things they were, at least. Dana recognized her now. She was the strong girl who had carried the three-hundredweight barrel on her head and went laughing up the hills.

This girl was pretty, perhaps, in a very wide use of the word, for she was a very wide girl. In many, in most places she might have been rated as quite pretty. But she wasn't as pretty as most of the girls on Basse-Terre. They were exceptional.

But she was a seven-colored female from the seven bloods running through her, and she was also her own color-maker. She was thicker than most of the girls of that island, more sturdy; and they were all a sturdy bunch. She had a dark grin that was unsettling, and light clear eyes. Dana realized that she had been talking sometimes French and sometimes English to him. That was all right. Basse-Terre had been English nearly as long and as often as it had been French. Everybody there spoke everything.

"What is your name, jade?" Dana asked her. He couldn't help calling her that. She was as sturdy and mountable as a little horse.

"My name is Angelene Dame-de-Dan," she grinned. "That means Bride-of-Dana. Oh, oh, oh the look on your face! Did you expect another sort of bride? Will you say to me as the United States man says, 'Be off, you nay-ger'?" And Angelene almost dissolved in laughter.

"Aye, you are a clown-jade, a skittish and silly mare," Dana growled. "You said your surname was Domdaniel. Now you say that it is Dame-de-Dan."

"Oh yes. I am the House of Dana. I am the Bride of Dana. I am your house. Come live in me."

"You're naught but a heavy-haunched jade of this green island," Dana groused. (Ah, but Green was one of the seven colors and races of her.)

"Come ride me then," Angelene grinned, cocking a heavy haunch at him. "Dana Coq-a-l'âne the burlesque hero was a girl-

rider, and Dana Cosquin was to be the soldier and seaman of high fortune. You are both. Come live in me, Dana! But there is my dour friend wandering below and exploring the little streams! I will go and devil him for a little while. You amuse yourself with the pretty Celeste, and see if you can catch the pun in my weaving on her."

Angelene went whooping down the rough rock terraces in pursuit of the dour United States man Otis Ranker. A pungent creature she was, appealing to every sense.

But Dana Cosquin really had come home. It was a cloudy reality. It was *fantôme* fact, still it was so. On this island he was truly at home for at least some short days of his life. This was his home, more even than Bantry Bay in Ireland where he had been born something short of thirty years ago. This was the place he would come back to always. This was the place he would die. The Grave of Dana Cosquin had been called by that name for more than a hundred years. Should he not someday inhabit it then? It was a natural stone cave, they said, and he hadn't seen it yet.

The House of Dana Cosquin, this large flat rock on which he stood and dreamed, had been known by its name for twice as long as had the Grave. And Dana *would* build a home here someday, in five years, or in ten. Ah well, he'd begin to build it now. He gathered high jungle rocks, prying them out of their grass and moss, and outlined his house with them on the big flat rock. Some of these rocks were very heavy. Well, he was very strong. He could have carried a three-hundredweight barrel on his own head, if he'd had as much heaped hair on his head for cushion as Angelene had. Some of the rocks that he rolled and dragged and lifted into position were four or five-hundredweight. He set the plans for the walls or ramparts. He set a more vague plan with smaller stones for the individual rooms and porches. He worked hard for two hours.

Then he lay down with the big rock itself for bed and a sizeable stone for pillow. He lay with the high crests behind him and the slopes and the ocean before him. He listened to a curious dialog of two voices, the voice of the seven-colored Angelene Domdaniel and that of the dour Otis Ranker. They were in a stream bed three hundred feet south of him, three hundred feet lower down. It was very steep land here.

Oh that girl was a kidder, an harasser, a gay instigator, a mocker.

And Otis Ranker answering her in a worried voice, he had been to all the corners of the world for gold, to Australia and Africa and South America. He was a rough looking and rough talking man.

He was afraid of no man or beast on Earth.

One thing about him though (Dana had guessed it before, and Angelene had guessed it in delight now), although Otis was not afraid of God or Devil or Man or Beast, he was afraid of Woman. Angelene was having her own sort of hilarity over the discovery, and Otis Ranker was suffering.

And yet it isn't a rare thing. Remember all those bold-shy men who were the first exploring men in so many parts of the world. Abel Tasman, Vitus Bering, Marco Polo, Meriwether Lewis, Bingley Raffles, Robert Clive, James Cook the Captain himself—they went to the ends of the land and to the ends of the ocean. All were driven by the wild spirit of adventure, it is said. But what if they didn't go willingly at all? What if they were chased? They were all bold-shy; they were all withdrawn characters. Few of them were wived, and none of them was wanton. Really, did they climb the highest mountains and cross the widest oceans because they were afraid of the women at home? Dana chuckled at his own insight in this.

Dana could hear the worried voice of Otis Ranker far below him: "Be gone from me, you nay-gress. It's indaycent the way you talk." And the whooping laughter of Angelene Domdaniel was like a whole orchestrated jungle.

Ah, but she'd put the prod to Dana also! Which Dana was he really? Was he the girl-rider of the comic minstrelsy, or was he the breaker of stallions and the soldier and seaman of high fortune? Och, he was both; hadn't all the high heroes been both? The Irish giants had often made women carry them on their backs for great distances. When a woman was unusually weary of an evening it was said that she had been giant-ridden. And the hero Finn McCool himself had ridden on the back of a maiden so that he could not be tracked by his great footprints through the snow. Einhardt had ridden Erma, the daughter of Charlemagne, for the same reason.

Remember the evening at the Aran Islands off Galway Bay in Ireland when the gay women had waded to the boats and taken their men onto their shoulders to carry them dry-shod to shore just for the lark of it? Damisa said that this was sometimes done at African landings, and a seaman told of Polynesian maidens giving the same welcome to men from ships' boats.

Dana had ridden on the merry shoulders of Elaine Kingsberry when they played the dance named Ride the Wild Mares in Hendaye. And he'd often so romped on his now dead wife Catherine Dembinska, as she had once rimed: "In me and out me,

aride and above, Ten full days that my lover love!"

Others too. A Gypsy lass in Savoy had invited Dana to ride on her back for luck and for a florin, and he had; and he'd had luck from it. And he'd ridden on the round Dutch belly of Scheherazade Jokkebrok in the whirl-around dance named Toton. Angelene Domdaniel also had such a round full belly, but was it Dutch? Dutch was not one of the canonical colors and races of Basse-Terre; yet there was Dutch blood there.

Others also. Another Dutch girl who had carried him across the shallow flat-boat canal in Amsterdam. And he'd ridden a small fanged beauty in south France, she who had given him a letter from Ifreann. No, that may not have happened, though there had been a sudden lust for it. There is dreaming mixed with the facts here. And an episode with Magdalena Brume—what? When did that happen? There is no real memory of it in the accounts, only in the present silliness and dreaming.

Eileen the Irish cousin had liked to give her suitors rides, one after another, and Dana also. No, that may not have happened, may only have been thought of; there was something the matter with that recollection. But hadn't he ridden Mariella Cima and small Jane Blaye and the contortedly beautiful Elena Prado? Some he had, some he hadn't. There's mix-up here. And there was another Dutch girl, no more than ten years old, who had bowed her back for Dana to mount her, and had then carried him endlessly up and down stairways, again and again, and yet again. Was she the same Dutch girl who'd actually carried Dana across the shallow canal? She was almost the same; she was the miniaturized dream image of the other.

And fair Celeste of Basse-Terre, who had taken Dana from the boat and carried him through the surf on his first coming to the island. But it couldn't have been like that. The boat had docked at the stone dock there, and Dana and his friends had walked off it laden with their baggage and the small child's coffin.

Dana, as a matter of fact, had been sleeping on the flat rock named the House of Dana Cosquin, with a smaller stone under his head for pillow. He had dozed off and had been dreaming slightly peculiar and erotic dreams. By the dreams' testimony he was Dana the Girl-Rider. Then the easy dream was broken, but at which end it was broken is not sure.

"*Get off my estate, you unseemly oaf!*" sounded the loudest voice that Dana had ever heard in his life, the fearful thunder that has no equal in the world. "*This rock is part of my estate, *Porte d'Enfer*. On your feet at once and be off, or die on you back where you are!*"

Oh, that was an ear-shattering voice! It would have waked the dead, as they say, but it didn't particularly disturb the living and sleeping Dana Cosquin. He was the other Dana also, the breaker of stallions and the soldier and seaman of high fortune, the authentic hero.

Besides, he recognized the thunderous voice and knew that it belonged to a dead man. Dana had killed the man. Why should he open an eye to look at a thundering dead man who couldn't be there? Instead, he shifted to another and more conversational dream.

"Hello, Ifreann," he said. "How are things with all the people in Hell? I do not believe that this great rock named the House of Dana Cosquin belongs to your estate *Porte d'Enfer* at all. Titles here are loose, and ancient name and repute prevail. This rock bears an ancient name that coincides with mine. In any case, absentee titles are voided, and I arrived before yourself. Do you know that the Governor of Guadeloupe and Basse-Terre refuses to believe that the Citizen King has fallen, that he refuses to believe or accept that there is now a Republic in France? Or that there is a new Dictatorship following on the Republic? Titles here are by possession only. Your four sinister flunkies stare at me but I will not be scared."

"Look at me, Dana," said Ifreann Chortovitch. "Wake up and look at me."

"I was dreaming peacefully. I will not wake up to see a dead man who is not there."

"I am alive," said Ifreann the Son of the Devil. "Come and put your hand into the wound in my side where your own rapier point went through. Dana, is it possible that there is something a little unoriginal in my words? I would not be unoriginal in anything."

"Go away, dead man."

"Wake and see," Ifreann said. "Or sleep and doubt. Dana, I love you with my own black love, but there is war between us forever. Do not fear my four sinister flunkies. They will not kill you. Torture you, yes, but not kill you. I have reserved that for myself. Will you not wake and see my face?"

"I will not," Dana said resolutely. Why should he believe a man might be alive when he had killed him with his own hand? Even such dreams are unhealthy. Dana moved to another level of dreaming, shifting slightly on the big rock. He was Dana the lap-rider now in a new light dream, but he remained Dana the Hero. He had faced down the fearsome Ifreann without even opening his eyes.



Big Ifreann sighed and walked away, a huge heavy man with a remarkably quiet tread. Or else he did no such thing; he was not there—he was a dead man and could not be there. But either Ifreann or his ghost was seen by more than a hundred people who knew him by sight, was seen by them that afternoon in the clear light, and it was said fearfully that the Master had returned to his Estate.

Dana was in another lazy dreaming. It is the perfume of a plant, said to be a species of the mandragora, that sets off such peculiar day-dreaming and sleep-dreaming in the high aromatic hills of Basse-Terre. These are involuted bold-shy imaginings and remembrances of grotesque romping with the high ladies: not social high ladies, personality high ladies.

“Wake up, Dana *Cuisse-Quinaud*,” Angelene Domdaniel spoke to him softly but powerfully in her sultry and throaty voice, this when the sun was about an hour lower. “Dana the girl-rider and lap-cavalier. You have been afternoon-dozing in the laps of the ladies long enough. Do you not know that I am a witch woman who can look into your dreams as another might look into a window?”

“Nobody can see into my dreams,” Dana said, not awake yet, not completely asleep.

“Can I not?” Angelene mocked him. “Have I not just watched you ensconced on the nice knees of one Magdalena? And riding the writhing limbs and loins of a serpentine Condessa? Played you not at Wild Mares with an Elaine? (Who is she? What trouble is she in? You do not know it, so I can know it only dimly.) Played you not also at Dance of the Unbreakable Dolls and at Mountain Bridges with one Margaret at Hendaye, a big jolly girl? Were you not a moment ago on the lively thighs and *ventre* of the Catherine? I love her best of them all.”

“Somebody gave me a potion to make me dream these things,” Dana defended himself.

“Some of them you only dreamed. Some of them you did.”

“And who was I about to play with when you woke me up?”

“With Celeste of this island. Of her I am jealous, so I spoke.”

Dana sat up. The colorful Angelene was sitting on one of the stones with which Dana had begun to outline his house. The perfume of the plant and the potion, which was said to be a species of the mandragora, was about her aromatically and erotically.

“If you can see into my dreams as into a window, Angelene, did you see a thunderous dead man who came to threaten me?” Dana

asked.

"The creature named Ifreann? Yes, I saw him both inside and outside your dream. Why didn't you afternoon-dream about my lap, Dana?"

"I don't know. How could you have seen Ifreann outside my dream when he lies dead in a foreign country?"

"I can see dead people as well as living. I can see ghosts also. Many have seen Ifreann in Basse-Terre today, though, and they say that he has returned to his estate. But tomorrow they will see him thinly like a shadow, and the next day they will not be able to see him at all. They will believe he is a ghost. He has been here before both as ghost and man. Why didn't you afternoon-dream about riding *me*, Dana? I'd love you to ride me with rowel spurs till the blood ran down my flanks."

"It is simply that you didn't enter into my dreaming, Angelene. Can one see herself in a dream if she looks into that dream as in a window."

"Certainly I can see myself in others' dreams, if I am there. Celeste was in your dream. You had her carry you through the surf on her shoulders. Not much shoulders she has really."

"This Ifreann who is dead, he does appear here sometimes as a ghost?"

"Sometimes as a ghost. Sometimes as a live man. You say that he is dead in a far country. I say that you cannot be sure of that. There is a concurrence of events that you and he have both left name places on this island that are older than yourselves, and that you have both come here for home. But he was here several years earlier than yourself. What was the passion of the Catherine?"

"The Green Revolution was her passion and her heart. But you wouldn't understand something like that, nor could I explain it."

"I not understand it? But I do understand that thing. It is deep in me."

"Catherine had it in her heart and in her brain. She had it all."

"The same thing is in my feet out of the earth. Catherine wore shoes; she never learned it from the earth through her feet. It works upward in me, as it worked downward in her. I also can teach it to you, Dana. I told you that I loved this Catherine the best of them all."

"You really saw her in my dreaming?"

"In it, and out of it. She was here a while ago and stood and smiled at you. But she is shadow. She cannot come back in flesh as Ifreann can. She doesn't seem to mind you rollicking with the girls, except with Celeste."

"It is you, not Catherine, who dislikes Celeste. You are intruding things into my dreams that were not really there, witch woman."

"It is near all of us who dislike Celeste. Come here to me now."

"Did you have fun with Otis Ranker down in the stream?"

"I will tell you nothing more till you come upon me here. I am an afternoon dream also. Come to my lap."

Dana sat on Angelene's lap on one of the outlining stones of his "house" there. Or it may be that he didn't do it at all. In future day-dreams and sleep-dreams, though, it would have happened that he did it now.

"Yes, I had fun with the United States man," Angelene said then. "He is shy with women, for all the rough man that he is. And I tease. He is gold-struck, and he will take ship within one week to the Isthmus and to California. You must not go with him, Dana. I have very much to teach you first.

"I told him that if he is gold-struck, well, I know of two sunken ships full of gold that I will show him. This is true; I know of them. He said no. He wants only the gold that he pans out of streams himself. He says that is taking part in making the sun itself, this taking bright gold out of water. He does not want gold coin. Shall I show and give the ships to you, Dana? Do you love gold coin?"

"I love it, but it must come to me in a special way; not (in my present case) from wrecked ships. Yes, I understand the passion of Otis for transmuting things to gold. To gold and to green we will transmute the world. They are having a minstrelsy and a feast this evening, and it comes on quick evening now. I go to it."

"Celeste will have you there and I will not ..."

"Nobody will have me anywhere, Angelene."

There really was something of the Green Revolution that came to Dana from Angelene's lap, and that came to her from out of the ground. Something of it had also come to Dana from Scheherazade's round belly in Amsterdam; she had given it words and story-form that had been working in him ever since. And other beginnings of it had been from the lively body and mind of Catherine, from the profound skull of Christian Blaye, from the strong rough ways of Malandrino Brume, from the Black Pope in the Carlist Hills, from the unseen Count Cyril. And Angelene was not the least of the influences; he had never before been so directly nourished by the thinking of the earth as he was through her now.

Ideas were tumbling in Dana's head and entrails. He must quickly be about the business to which he had been appointed. He knew where he would go. He didn't know what he would do. It

would be given him in those hours what to do.

He had found a home, and a home is found only to leave it again. Dana knew that he would leave Basse-Terre within the week and that he would not be back for several years. But he did have on this island a home to come back to (though it wasn't built yet); he did have a grave here to inhabit when the time for that came (he hadn't seen the grave yet, though it was within several miles; he wasn't sure that he would see it in life).

He rose from Angelene's lap, whether in reality or not, and started down towards the house of Charley Oceaen for party and minstrelsy. Angelene followed in a somewhat sulky manner.

"Do not let Celeste take hold of you," she said. "Whichever girl lifts you over the *seuil*, the threshold, of that house will be your belle for the party and the minstrelsy. It must not be Celeste. It must be Angelene."

"I will have no belle at all."

It was quicker dark here than they knew in Europe. Dana all but stumbled once, and he was a night man in any land.

"Let me take you upon me, as the Gypsy girl took you once for luck. I am surefooted as a donkey to carry you; otherwise you might stumble in the dark. If you haven't ridden Angelene, you haven't ridden at all."

Dana laughed and passed it off. It didn't happen, of course. He did not ride on the shoulders of Angelene down the steep path in the dark. But once, several months later, in a half-dream half-waking in a jungle below Darien, it happened that it *had* happened. With Dana, there were often several possible presents, and only much later might one of them become more probable of having happened than another.

They came to the group and Charley Oceaen's. Lanterns were burning inside, and the good folks had already begun to hum and sing and enter. Angelene believed that she had Dana firmly in hand.

Then the slight, bright Celeste came suddenly out of the dark and into the moment. She cut in front of them right at the doorway. She laughed, winked, and bowed her back for Dana. And Dana vaulted onto her lithe back, and she carried him over the threshold into the house. So Celeste was his belle for the party. This was a custom of Basse-Terre, that the girl doing this should be that man's belle. This part happened in all the possible presents; it was not mere contingency or dreaming.

"Oh the treason, the treason," Angelene was crooning, but she was laughing also. She didn't really mind Celeste. "Of what man shall I be belle now?"

It would be a fun feast. There was laughing inside and out. There was a rough-talking United States man outside who protested mightily about something. But he was being laughed down by the crowd. He was overwhelmed by arguments, and perhaps by force. The darkly grinning Angelene came in carrying in her arms the more-dour-than-ever Otis Ranker who was flushed even darker than herself.

They ate, drank, played instruments, and sang in the blood-tongues of all the mixed peoples of Basse-Terre. Dana gave verses in Irish, and Damisa the Leopard in Hausa. Someone gave tunes in Passar Malaya from the islands on the other side of the world, someone gave whanging chant in the nearly forgotten Carib. And the big choruses were in Spanish and French and English. It was all one minstrelsy, though, and it went on for several hours, the double stranded story of it.

And by the power of the Holy Ghost, all present understood it all. It was the little epic (Angelene said it was the *epicene*, and Dana was startled by the profundity of her pun) of the double person who was at the same time craven clown and great battler, who was skirt-minded man and mighty-minded magician, who was girl-rider and stallion breaker, who was knight of laps and who was high hero. The green tendrils were woven all through it in dozens of voices and verses, for pieces of it had come from every part of the world. The shape of the weave was somehow managed by Angelene who was a real weaver of talent.

It was the song-story of Daniel come to judgement. And Dana was Daniel, if he should prove to be that double hero.

So they sang and rimed it while they ate snails and pork, and drank the local rum (which is the best in the world) and the coffee (which is the worst). Coffee had not grown well on Basse-Terre. Some people there even drank the imported coffee from Turkey or Brazil, but not these poor people.

They wove the thousand-versed tale of every compromised hero from the beginning of the world. A gay Delilah locked Dana between her knees and sheared his hair off with a great shears; Dana's hair had grown a little long during his recent travels. A Lilith looped Dana in her own golden hair, bound him in it, knotted him in, and swung him in its loops as in a swing with great strong-necked rotation.

Dana was covered with a dozen skirts of crowding girls; he was Achilles hidden among women. It is said that the name which Achilles took when he hid among women is not beyond speculation. No need to speculate on it. The name was Danae, the

same as the daughter of Acrisius; Achilles became Danae, and he was also one of the Danai whose maleness was beyond doubt.

But there was a deep threat running through all this, a life threat; and Dana knew it. There are two sides to every coin, even this gold-minted sun coin of his identity. Whoever was forming this was forming it dangerously.

"Is it Scheherazade?" he asked Angelene Domdaniel once. "You know her. You saw her through my mind as through a window. Is this all one of her creations?"

"Oh, she is here, Dana. She makes it up of you and of Celeste who is the type-form, and of the stallion. I myself weave it of you. We, all of us here, create it. But can you play the part, or only half the part? It is meant to be death-dangerous, and you must play it all. Now go back and sit on the lap and belly of your belle Celeste."

It was a great bash of a party, but Dana did not drink too much or eat too much. He knew something of what he must face in the other part of it.

The Son of the Devil was burned in effigy at one time of the minstrelsy. This nearly went too far, and part of the roof of Charley Ocean's house was burned away. This was a bad sign. Dozens of people had actually seen the Son of the Devil that day. But the Son of the Devil is not the Stallion. They play different parts in this.

It was a sort of ritual, the things that Dana should do with the belle. The old people told him what he must do, and he did it. He stood on her bowed back and her nape. He went into high handstand on her upraised hands and touched feet to the roof rafters.

"All ride the girl well," a man said, "but none has ever broken the Stallion. All have been pretenders. You are no more the Dana than the others have been."

"*I am* the Dana," Dana insisted.

"We will see."

The slight bright Celeste was perfect in her part, swaying gently like a reed however Dana mounted her. But she was a reed in no danger of breaking. This merry fluff-head was strong as are all the Basse-Terre girls.

The minstrelsy was coming to the end of its first part. Dana sat on the lap of the oldest crone there and of the youngest girl.

The church bell rang midnight.

"Now for the Stallion," several of the men cried.

"The Stallion has killed twelve men," one of them said cheerfully. "You will be the thirteenth."

### III

## STALLION TO SPANISH MAIN

*Beginning with the laws that keep  
The planets in their radiant courses,  
And ending with some precept deep  
For dressing eels, or shoeing horses.*

—Winthrop Mackworth Praed

Then they were all out into the night with torches, and going over the tangled steep land to wherever the Stallion might be.

"He is enclosed on the estate named Greenfields," Charley Oceaan explained to Dana. "He is in a large enclosure backed by bluffs and closed in with a planked fence that is twenty feet high. I know that you have heard him there today."

Dana had indeed heard the creature, or the uncreated weird thing. He had heard the neighing, screaming, roaring of it. It had to be more than mere horse. It was lunging hurricane also.

"The Stallion is the ninth of his line," Charley said, "and he is the most savage of all of them. With each stallion of the dynasty only huge and powerful mares are mated. The encounter would kill an ordinary mare. It even kills some of the extraordinary ones. But the reigning stallion sires other savage stallions which are kept in another place.

"Every year, the most savage of the four-year-old stallions is put in with the reigning stallion, and they fight to the death. Usually the reigning stallion will not be defeated till he is quite old. But the present stallion killed his father while that father was still in his prime. That was three years ago. He killed his third yearly challenger just a month ago, they tell me. Now he is seven years old, the high prime age of a fighting stallion. And he is incomparably the most fierce of the entire line."

"I have broken many horses," Dana said.

"This case isn't as you would imagine. He will not be stalled or penned or saddled or bridled. You must mount and ride him bare-backed and bare-handed, without even a girth-band. About every ten years some man attempts the feat. All have been killed at the attempt: twelve men killed, and you are the ill-fated thirteenth. I

would love and respect you less if you withdrew from it now. Still, I will be sorry to see you dead."

It was screaming thumping thunder as they came near the huge stockade on the estate named Greenfields. When men come there at night with torches, it is sometimes to intrude a great mare. But the stallion did not scent a mare. Why then, it would be a man and a murder, which the stallion enjoyed equally.

"He is all teeth and hoofs," one of the men said. "In my youth I saw one of the stallions slash clear through a man's neck with his teeth, and leave that man's head rolling on the ground. That was the grandfather of this stallion, but he was not nearly as fierce as this one."

"Really, I enjoyed the first part of the ritual," Dana laughed, "and I expect to enjoy the final part even more. As for the first, I know that someone put the species of mandragora into a tea that I drank today. This induced my strange erotic afternoon dreaming, and it put me into the mood for the living out of some of the imaginings. But was anything put into my rum or my coffee tonight? Is there a species of plant that gives a man special courage?"

"There is, and you were given it," another of the men said, "You'd be quaking in your bones otherwise. The draught may be enough to get you into the arena with the devil-beast. It cannot be enough to preserve your life with him."

They came to the tall palisade, the heavy stockade-wall rising black and rough in the dark.

"The gate cannot be opened for a man," one of them said. "The gate is only opened to intrude a mare, and that with extreme caution and trickery. If the devil-beast ever broke out of the stockade, he'd terrorize the whole island. We will throw a rope with a grapple hook and you can climb up the stockade wall with it."

"I'll use no rope," Dana said.

Dana was a leaper. He withdrew a little. He ran at the rough timbered wall, ran up it, trod the very air for extra height, and hooked his fingers into the rough top of the wall. Immediately he knew what made the top so rough. The animal had savaged the top with his teeth and fore-hoofs. Imagine a leaping stallion that could slash and bite those gashes and gaps in the hard-wood paling at twenty feet height.

Dana pulled himself up and over. The screaming beast had withdrawn about fifty yards. It was mad and lividly dark. The half-moon was near to setting; the dread battle would be by starlight and torchlight.



Dana dangled atop the stockade wall. Other men had gone up ropes and were atop the wall also, but the stallion did not notice them. The beast knew which man was the Man. The more-than-animal came at Dana in a frenzied howling rush, very fast; thirty or forty miles an hour. And Dana felt fear.

"But it works both ways, Old Stud," he called loudly, for he always used his voice as one of his weapons in battle. He felt the wave of fear bounce back from the rampaging animal.

Dana had felt this answering fear before: he had felt it in his first knife-fight with Judas Revanche; he had felt it in his confrontations and in his duel to the death with Ifreann Chortovitch the Son of the Devil. The fear that fuels the second courage will pour out from each antagonist equally.

Crashing the fence, the stallion leapt high. It could reach Dana on his perch, reach him with the slashing teeth and cudgel forehoofs that had so savaged the top of that timbered wall.

But at the moment of crash, Dana leapt high, up and over the hoofs and the teeth. He landed heavily behind the animal from his twenty-five foot drop. He landed and rolled, for he knew the ways of rearing murderous stallions. And the beast, as expected, flung itself backwards to pin the rolling Dana under its ton of high-impact weight.

But Dana was caught under only by heel and ankle, and they too tough to be shattered on the churned-up, hoof-deep, loose earth. Then it became a question of who was rolling on which.

Dana chopped the beast. Axe-like hand blows to the *ganache*, the lower jaw, can take considerable of the slashing bite out of a stallion. They are like blows to the throat of a man. They also stole the voice, muted the stallion's screaming roar for a while; they even delayed the gnashing teeth.

In such combat Dana was like a worm with many a turn in him. He was onto the belly of the great animal, seeming to hold it as one wrestler might hold another in the pin. And now he had voice advantage which he never relinquished again.

"Thou *etalon*, thou *garanyon*, thou *stail*; be thyself quiet," he ordered. "How is it that thyself does not know of our kinship or my mastery?" Often one can master with the voice alone.

But the stallion had a neck on him like an old King Saurian, like a great earth-shaking reptile. It was back with its savage teeth, seeking and wounding Dana, allowing no hiding-place anywhere on itself.

Dana thrashed about like a snake or an eel, avoiding greater wound by the sharp incisors and by the high-crowned grinding

teeth that are almost like canines in fighting stallions. When the animal heaved itself to its feet, Dana clung to its belly. Then around the belly and onto the back when the head on its stretched neck sought him on the under-side. And Dana was up onto the long neck itself when it swung up and around to have him from atop. Dana dug into the mane, into the high crine with hands and heels, and still delivered stunning blows to the head and lower jaw.

"Thyself are like a spoiled child," he chided the beast. "Thyself must recognize me, must do no spoil either to me or to thyself." The Irish use the familiar form in talking to horses, believing them to be close cousins of men. Dana always called the giant fellow *tu-sa*, thyself.

But then the big fellow reared and flung himself backwards, whip-swinging like a mountainous giant flail. He stunned himself with the hammer-blow of his own neck and head on the earth, but Dana was out from under too quickly for him.

"Thou'rt too fat and heavy in the withers and loins for such manoeuvre, my cousin," Dana admonished the animal. "Thou'rt too slow with the whipping of thy own body, too cumbrous in thy backlash. 'Twould be good enough for riding the mares or the girls, but a fighting man or stallion must be like the very lightning."

The stallion was like the very lightning then; not for nothing was he the most fierce of the stallions ever. He was stunned and crazy lightning, but he struck. He was a recovering, rising, erecting lightning-bolt coming out of the ground, felling Dana with a fore-hoof that was a thunderbolt instantaneous with its own lightning strike. Then, gathering like a blinding cloud, high in the air, the animal came down in a five-pronged strike, four exploding hooves and the screaming gnashing mouth. Nor did Dana escape him.

A ton of animal was on Dana in the form of four cudgels, and that mouth, too big to belong to any horse, had Dana by the head.

Dana was swung high in the air then, a whipping swing intended to break his neck; most of his head was in the stallion's mouth. It was the animal's round, but it wasn't the final round. Dana rode the whipping with neck unbroke and with throat not too deeply torn. Dana might yet lose an eye or an ear; his whole skull might still be crushed. But Dana would not crush easily.

A very strong hand of Dana, and a great wrist, dug into the stallion's mouth where the long back jaws gaped a little space from the Dana-head, then fingers that could crush a wolf's head were a-grip of the soft palate, the velum, the glottis of the great

horse; and Dana was choking the animal from inside its own throat.

The beast gagged Dana out as though he were a ball of phlegm. Then it rose in the air again with striking hooves cocked; yet it did not rise screaming this time nor so like lightning as before.

Dana was out and beyond, and then he was upon the beast again. High on the neck of it once more, he seized the moment and knew that the tide had turned in his favor. At this same instant, half a dozen men left their viewing perches on the fence, also sensing the turn of the battle, and went hurriedly to bring another creature.

"'twas a great round thyself fought," Dana praised the beast sincerely. "Thou'rt a champion indeed and I was wrong to misdoubt thy lightning. But it is finished with now. Give over, cousin. I've no wish to punish thyself more."

Dana was no more than half-blinded with blood and he was unbroken in major bone. He had been savaged by horses before. After all, each great cudgel that had hammered him had been no more than five-hundredweight of itself. Though terribly bruised and lamed, he was less slowed by it all than he would be on the following day.

The animal reared and pitched ten dozen times yet, and flung itself down again and again. But Dana was somewhere a-mount the animal every time it rose again. Dana was the punishing burr that would not be shook out.

Another hour did it. Dana rode the tired animal to a stand-still, riding on the back now and not on the neck. The animal reached around and nickered Dana's legs with his teeth, but he did not really bite him more. A respect and friendship had developed between them.

Dana rode and instructed the animal for another half hour then, moving him with his heels into the flanks, guiding and turning him with a hand on the side of his neck.

"I'll have thee shod," Dana told him. "And then I will give thyself to a lady."

There had been another neighing screaming in the distance for some while, and now it had come very close. The big stallion was very uneasy with it. He shook, not really with fear, but with confusion, not understanding what his role would be now.

"Be thyself at all ease," Dana told him. "The custom is broken."

Dana leapt to the earth and walked towards the big staked gate. He walked painfully now, much more difficultly than he rode. But he could not let himself stiffen up. There was still another ordeal

for him to face that night. The stallion followed him in friendship, biting him gently and in companionable fashion on the shoulders, but not biting him to blood or hardly to bruise.

With great turmoil the large gate had swung open. Another stallion, larger and younger than the old one, louder of voice, was in the gateway, partly restrained by twenty men with twenty ropes looped about him. One of these men was more avid than the others; he'd like to have tried this new king stallion himself. But the young stallion sounded and stood, with no regard at all for the men but only for the father stallion. The twenty looped ropes were slashed and pulled away from him. Then the young devil gathered himself into a surging charge at the father stallion, breathing fire literally.

The young stallion had liked to feed on the sulphurous weeds of the methane swamps, and now his breath glowed fire-like in the star-lit dark. Such glowing breath on dark nights is sometimes seen even from horses that are not particularly savage.

It was a screaming humping charge then. The old stallion stood ready and steady, still the king of all the horses on Basse-Terre and full of heart, for all his weariness.

But Dana was between the thundering wild one and the old king.

"*Stad!*" Dana thundered with his own thunder, "Stop!" And the young stallion reared high, braking with his great hind legs, plowing deep furrows with his hind hoofs. Then he was down on four legs again and almost nose to nose with Dana Coscuin, both of them fire-eyed and taut.

"*Stad!*" Dana thundered again as the younger animal made to move against the both of them. The young beast stood angrily still at the command. (All horses understand Irish. It was the language they used anciently, back when horses still spoke with tongues.)

"Thou'lt not slay thy father," Dana spoke solidly. "I put an end to that custom now. Thou be new stallion here, but less of a devil one than thyself intended. In this, the old days end right now. Thy noble father will be shod and will become the property of a lady of this place."

Dana walked out through the big gate, and the old stallion followed him. The people stood back in recollected fear, but the old king horse was silent and aloof. The gate was closed on the huge young devil stallion. This one screamed and tore the turf all the night long, savaging the top of the fences as his father had done, enjoying himself. He would not admit that the old days had ended. Let any man of the island, even Dana, come back in; and

there would be a new story.

"You told the young devil that you would have the father shod, and then you would give him to a lady," Celeste said, her own eyes sparking like stars from the excitement of the night. "The Angelene shoes horses as well as weaves. Let her shoe him and then bring him to me for mine."

"Not so, light head," Dana told her. "Angelene Domdaniel will shoe him and she will own him. She is the lady. You are only the belle."

"We are already close friends," Angelene said as she swung herself up on the king stallion. "I have visited him inside the palisade often and ridden him. He is savage only with men and devils. He has always known me the witch-woman just as he now knows you the master. You know that you have other business tonight? You understand ambush?"

"I know it, I expect it, I understand it," Dana said.

"Is there anything I can do for you in it, me being able to see into these things?"

"Nothing, Angelene, nothing."

"With what shall I ready your body then, when it is over with?" Angelene asked with sad, sly humor. "With aloes and myrrh?"

"Not such, Angelene. Now they draw one neatly, and then use the new formaldehyde and other such compounds. It is all compounds now. The age of simple things is gone, which is part of what has gone wrong with the world."

"I know all these new things. I will be your body and tomb woman here, but I'll not want it to be for many years yet."

"Worry none about my body tonight, lady. It'll not be much more mangled than it is now. Pray for my soul a little. I'd asked that I not have to kill again. Tonight I may choose to kill for mere effect, and my willfulness worries me."

Angelene rode the tall animal down the steep ways towards the Great Thermal Springs near where she had her house and her *fabriques*. Dana took the higher way, along the edge of the estate named Greenfields, along the edge of the estate named *Porte d'Enfer*, towards his own House of Dana Cosquin which lay between those two estates. Dana had proved himself. He was both Dana Coq-à-l'âne and Dana Cosquin of the island legends, and that without having left off being Dana Coscuin of Bantry Bay.

"He'll have nothing but indifferent big murdering men and bully boys now, now that he's not more than a shadow himself, if even that. I have seen the four of them. They are dangerous, but only as four simultaneous animals might be dangerous to me," Dana

reasoned to himself. "He'll not now have four such men as was Judas Revanche. There aren't in the world four such sincere and devoted killers, four such goodly bad men. He'll not have four such men as the one I killed in the hills behind St. Jean de Luz just off the Spanish border. That one was almost more man and more animal than myself. But I have seen these four looking at me in the daytime just past, and I will see them again before they see me."

Dana was musing about the four flunkies of Ifreann Chortovitch the Son of the Devil. Dana could, and he would, pick them off one by one; but first he would have his moment and his effect in the middle of them.

"I assume that they have known the region for some time, and I have known it less than a full day," Dana reasoned. "I assume also that I am smarter than they are. They appear to be a doltish bunch, too doltish. So it may be that they are unnaturally directed. They are too much alike. Four brothers could not be that much alike. So it may be that they are manifestations and not men. If they are men indeed, yet they may be manipulated as zombies by one mind I have encountered. They look too much alike; they do not seem to think or act of themselves; they have been impressed upon. It's possible that 'tis he who impresses them, even though he's dead. We know from the catechism that both the mind and the will survive death and can still influence.

"Ah, my enemy, you've become four-formed and eight-handed in reaching for me. I'll show you that I'm a shattering man myself. And the reason your four flunkies look too much alike is that they all look too much like you."

Dana followed a meander, a hog-back ridge in the hills. He could not choose exactly the place of the encounter, since it was himself being ambushed, but he could choose the type of the place. They would have to come up to him, and he might be able to break down from them.

"I haven't your treachery, my enemy," Dana said silently, "but I have more flexibility than you. The only trap you understand is the dead-fall; you'd be inept at the running snare. You are lacking in human enjoyments and human experience, being what you are. You are lacking in such human enjoyments as hunting foxes, or playing foxes. You'll not understand such pleasure as 'going to ground,' even though yourself are now under the ground. You'll not understand about the shrew who was able to eat up four elephants, nor how he did it. 'Och, one at a time I did it,' he said. So I will eat up your four elephants tonight. But you cannot even understand the speech of shrews."

Dana had always been a very good night-man. Now, and suddenly, he became an incredibly bad night-man. Here and there he stumbled just as an ordinary man might do it in an unfamiliar darkness. Here and there he sent stones rolling down just as an ordinary man might not be able to avoid doing. Here he crackled with sudden sound through brittle thickets, just as an ordinary man might have to do it to make his way in such a rough place. But Dana was not an ordinary man.

He announced his trail and his going to even the most doltish ears. He had crossed a part of this meandering hog-back during the daytime and evening before, and he pieced the rest of it together with his night-eyes and his night-mind. There were three places they could ambush him on this meander, and the third was best for himself; there were better ways leading down from it than up.

Timing it well, estimating their place and movement from their own slim sound (they did move rather well and with fair silence, whether they were manifestations or men), Dana forced the third place of encounter on them, it seeming that they forced it on him.

They erupted up out of the dark and they had Dana boxed in, the tall and shaggy four of them, at a widened place where the high meander made a turn. Dana knew fear then, real quaking fear. There was never such a genuine hero as Dana who knew such quick genuine fear. It was not a lack of confidence in himself. It was part of the sharpening of the senses and the necessary prelude to battle. Besides, there was an unaccountable element, and Dana was upset when there turned up unaccountable elements after he had counted anything: there was a distress flare from the sea clearly visible (to Dana, apparently not to the four looming forms) from this high hogback ridge.

The four tall man-forms loomed over Dana: one with a long knife, one with a heavy cudgel, one with a Spanish pistola, one with a flat cudgel. Dana spun round in both real and simulated dismay. He stood then, in attitude of surprise, with his back to the man with the flat cudgel, and his face gaping and darting at the other three.

And, of course, he was knocked flat on his face by the man with the flat cudgel. Dana had preferred that one.

The flat cudgel makes a certain faint whistle in the air as it descends, and a man with true night-ears can tune its course just as a bat tunes obstacles and prey with his own night-ears. Dana, estimating it and going with it, took more of the blow on his shoulders and neck than on his head. He was stunned (there'd been no way out of that), but he was less stunned than he seemed.

And the fear had left him now. It was always prelude to the battle, but it was never part of the battle.

"Ifreann wants to see you," said the opposite man, the man with the heavy cudgel who now stood at Dana's head. And he kicked Dana in the mouth.

So two of them had spoken, one with his flat cudgel, one with mouth and foot. Time for the move when the fourth of them spoke. This enemy, who was now a composite, could not resist triumphant parley; he never had been able to resist it. And, if he controlled the four manifestations here, then he would speak through each of the four.

"I'll not see him," Dana mumbled with his mouth in the cooling sod of the meander.

"You will see him, if we must cut out your eyes and present them to him on stalks which he can hold to make you see him," said the third man, the man with the long knife, the man who now stood to Dana's left hand as Dana lay face down. The man slashed with the knife on the side of Dana's head, while Dana tried to bury his head in the turf. It may be that the man intended to cut one of the eyes out, if Dana had not jerked and turned his head a bit; or he may not have so intended. But three of the men had spoken in their ways.

"The Ifreann, is he alive or dead?" Dana asked dully.

"In whatever state he is in," said the fourth man, who held the Spanish pistola, "we will send you to him in that same state, thus —"

That was the moment, the moment when the fox goes to ground from the midst of the hounds after seeming to be paralyzed by fear. It's the moment when the snake doubles, feints, and re-doubles. The fourth man had spoken with words, but when he spoke also with the pistola he was too late for Dana. Dana was out of the middle of them, off of the meander, and down into one of the open ravines even as the pistola flashed and shot sounded.

Ah, Dana was a real night man now, gone thirty yards before the ears of the four manifestations had cleared from the barking blast of the gun. He stood still then, supernally dark and without breath or sound or aura, able to take any of several instant ways from his new darkest spot.

"You know not fox ways; you know not natural snake ways, even though you're an unnatural snake yourself," Dana taunted his enemy, hidden mind to hidden mind. "You do not understand how cannily natural things may move on the earth. And you have admitted that you are dead, Ifreann. That one said that he'd send



me to you in the state yourself were in, and he intended to send me to you dead."

(Dana's reasoning may have been at fault here. It's possible that the men meant to torture him only, with pistol wound, as well as with knife and boot and cudgel, before bringing him before Ifreann in whatever state he was in.)

The four tall and shaggy forms moved now, rapidly and even efficiently, in a loose group, off of the hog-back meander and down into the ravines after Dana. They had one dark lantern; it threw a single narrow spot, out and down.

It was difficult for Dana to resolve the men behind and above the narrow spot of light, but it would not have been difficult to escape them. The man with the dark lantern was the man with the knife. He hacked silently at restraining lianas and vines as he cut a quiet way, and the other three followed. There was one liana more restraining than the others, and another of the flexible dangles caught him about the knife wrist as he hacked soundlessly through one of them. The man hardly realized that the hand of Dana had him by the knife wrist till the knife was twisted out of the hand, or that he had lost his voice till a crackling blow from Dana took it away from him, or that he had lost consciousness till a second blow from Dana robbed him of that. And Dana had the dark lantern a-hand with hardly a bobble in its movement.

"Is it all right down and ahead?" called one of the men behind, the man with the big cudgel.

"All right down and ahead," Dana sent back in a hoarse whisper. Dana had heard the man with the knife speak, had heard him threaten to cut his eyes out; he had also heard the shadow of Ifreann himself in the voice, as a man's voice will be like the shadow of that of a more powerful man he has been associated with. And Dana was a good mimic. He led them, with the dark spot, around the body of the man he had felled, dictating their very footfalls as he went.

At the same time he spoke voicelessly to his first victim that he now left behind (it is quite possible to speak so to a man who has just been bowled over the low threshold of conscious and so is receptive): "I send you back to Ifreann with the message. I will not see him or recognize his being. I send you to him living, on the very slender chance that he is living, and because I am disinclined to kill again. If he is not in that state, and the message does not reach him there's naught lost but your own well-feeling."

Dana tied the lantern to a slim hanger, then set it to bobbling slightly and wavering as though a man were still holding it. But

he himself stepped back and around, letting the low-hanging vine carry the burden and the bait.

"What is it man, what have you spotted?" called the man behind, the man with the heavy cudgel. "Have you spotted the Irish *breallan*? Have you him down?" (Ifreann had had an Irish girl for mother and the Devil himself for father, but how was it that one of his manifestations or flunkies used an Irish turn?) The heavy-cudgel man was almost up to the bobbling dark lantern when Dana struck, not him the second man, but the last of them, the flat-cudgel man. He forced a cry out of that fellow that would have curdled the spleen of an ape. It was such a heart-cry as is sometimes given when a knife slips between the ribs; yet doesn't slip there mortally, or the cry wouldn't have such power. "You also go to him alive, and tell him I won't come," Dana spoke voicelessly.

Two men down and damaged now, the first and the last of the trail of them, and the other two thrown into somewhat of a night confusion.

"Quick, bring the lantern," the heavy-cudgel man called to the man who wasn't there. "The *luath* man is behind us. We'll have him quickly, to the saving of our companion and ourselves."

Then a man was at the lantern again, Dana, and he brought it along in seeming obedience. (How was it that Dana had taken a liking to the heavy-cudgel man, and him a servitor of the Ifreann?) "Here with the light, here with the light!" the cudgel man called. "He's blooded but not dead. You, Jaime, be cocked and ready for a shot. The lurker is still near. And you, Sebastian, set down the lantern to light this one, and then guard aft."

But it was Dana, not Sebastian, who set the lantern down obediently, and then cudgeled the stooping cudgel-man unconscious with his own cudgel.

"And you I send to him alive," Dana minded at the new-fallen fellow, "and tell him, if he is alive, and he isn't, that I will not come and I will not see him." Then Dana doused the dark lantern.

Jaime, the pistola-man, gibbered fearfully in the dark. He called and got no answer. He stumbled and fell. He arose and ran. He stumbled again, and Dana came upon him and killed him.

"The Ifreann deserves his answer, though he deserves nothing else beyond. You, Jaime, go to him dead, as I believe he is dead, and tell him that I'll have no more dealings with him in this life nor in another."

Dana retrieved the lantern, lighted it again, unhooded it to a wider flood light. He also took the Spanish pistola, and with these he went up to the higher ridge. The unaccountable element was

still there: the distress flare from the sea. There was a touch of sea-light now, and Dana saw that it was an uncertain sail-ship afraid of the surf thunder. It was near to Capes-Terre where it would wreck without pilot. Dana signalled as well as he could with pistola and lantern. He signalled for it to go around south and west. This would bring it in sight of the Basse-Terre landing by daylight. The ship sent flare again, and a different sort of flare. Dana did not know whether he was understood.

Angelene Domdaniel came to Dana then. How had she come unheard onto a night-man like Dana? She had a pistol that sent up flares of four different colors. She muzzle-loaded them one after another and sent them up.

"They will understand now," she said. "They will go around. It does not matter whether it is a friendly ship or an enemy ship. It is a *niais* ship, a goofy ship, and it is lost."

Dana and Angelene walked to Basse-Terre. It was Sunday morning and almost dawn. The priest, in soutane, was already riding a donkey into town from the other way.

"You needn't have killed the man," Angelene said. "I could have gotten your message to Ifreann somehow, if he needed the message."

"I know it. I killed him out of willfulness," Dana answered.

"Then go to the priest."

Dana went to the priest and told him he wished to be confessed. The man took a stole from the donkey-saddle and put it around his neck without dismounting. Dana told the priest that he had killed a man.

Had he contrition for it now, the priest asked him.

Not yet, Dana told the priest, for the night's excitement was still on him. It might be, as a matter of likelihood, that it would be many months before he would have contrition for this act. The willfulness worked in him this way sometimes.

"Then, as a matter of likelihood, it may be many months before you can be absolved," the priest told Dana. The simple-minded priest told him also that the willfulness had been set into him by an antagonist, that Dana had been defeated in a combat, and had not won as he had believed.

"There is a lot you don't know about this sort of combat," Dana said stubbornly.

"And a lot that I do know about it," the priest told him.

The priest told him again that he could not be absolved and could not receive the sacrament in his present state of mind. And there the case remained.

Soon it was full early morning and people began to come to the

church to the Mass. The priest heard many and quick confessions for half an hour. Then all the faithful filled the front of the grass-roofed church, and those others who either did not belong to the Faith or who (as in Dana's case) were impenitent within it, lingered in the back. One man, the sous-sous governor Guerchin, stood just outside and would not enter, but he was not keeping his accustomed distance.

It was two minutes later that Dana was jolted by a great elbow into his side. He looked about (and up) into a grotesque grinning and winking face that filled most of the broken head of a big loose man. It was the heavy-cudgel man whom Dana had left as almost dead short hours before. The big fellow nudged Dana again and grinned. They stood side by side.

The priest was a puny man of all the seven bloods of Basse-Terre. He looked like a simpleton, but he sermonized with quick intelligence when the time for it came.

"The world is in a state of torment," he said, "as it has always been. Now, a *tourment* is really a great twisting motion, and in Latin it was the name of an engine of war. It is at the same time a whirlpool, *tourbillon*, and a torture.

"The only way to escape from the bothersome froth of the whirlpool is to enter into the very center of it, which is Christ. There only is the real depth and moment. It is there that the big world must enter; it is there that our smaller local world must enter.

"There are only two things: the Center which is everything, and the eccentricity (the off-center) which is almost nothing. There is no other up or down, in or out, left or right. All of the eccentrics resemble each other in their weightless noise and in their error, however much they claim to be opposites. The greater the eccentricity, the less is the grace and power.

"However, in our fallen and defective state, all things will be at least slightly eccentric. In no other way will they acquire angular momentum than by being a little off center; in no other way will they know the center. This angular momentum which we acquire is known as the Life Affair. But to leave the deep center very far is to lose weight and depth and substance; it is to be no more than empty air moving at silly speed, of too little matter even to be called a wind.

"There are troubles today in the larger world. I will not detail them. We have troubles enough of our own. I have with me new tobacco plantings and new coffee plantings that I will give to those who want them. I doubt that they are better than the old ones. I have new millet and new corn. I am not sure that our

island is the proper land for either of them. Nevertheless, we must plant always—that is why we are on the earth.

“Also I have, as always, a need of money. Anyone with sudden new coin in his pocket and the sudden disposition for it may give it to me either publicly or privately.

“That all things may be renewed in Christ! *Per evangelica dicta deleantur nostra delicta.*”

There had grown up outside a *tourment*, a *tourbillon*, a torture of sound; yet it was really a weightless noise. Dana himself knew that it was a sail-ship coming in clumsy fashion to the landing, and tired and vocal persons dragging themselves off of it.

The sous-sous Guerchin left to see about it. Damisa the Leopard left, and the United States man Otis Ranker left to see about it. There was no need for anyone else to go.

After the Mass, Dana did find sudden new coin in his pocket and the sudden disposition to give it. He went and gave it to the puny priest. This man gave out the various seeds and plantings that he had brought with him, told a little news and heard a little. Then he mounted donkey and rode away in somewhat of a hurry. He must ride to Capes-Terre and say Mass there that morning also, and it was a hard ride.

Dana walked down to the landing with the heavy-cudgel man of last night's encounter. There was something puzzling about them walking together now. Even more puzzling was the aspect of a third man who now joined them. Dana looked sharply at this man; he knew him and he didn't. It was a Frenchman or a light mixed-blood who wore Sunday coat and shoes, a dandy man of the place who was still a little out of place.

The man had a look about him that Dana had seen before, the look of delegate authority. And he smiled more with his nose than with his mouth.

“What will you tell me, man?” Dana asked him.

“Go to Guayaquil,” the man said.

“All right,” Dana agreed, and continued towards the landing with the heavy-cudgel man. Once, on Bantry Bay in Ireland, a strange man had told Dana “Go to Hendaye.” This couldn't be the same man, though there was slight similarity. He could, however, be a delegate from the same man who had sent the other.

The sail ship at the landing was the same goofy ship that Dana had signalled on the night just past. It hadn't really been in trouble, just lost and unseaworthy and with crew and passengers weary and a little sick. It didn't matter much that the thing was unseaworthy. It wasn't, in that season, very rough sea in those regions, and many unseaworthy ships were putting out in that

year from United States ports with cargo holds rigged up to take many passengers.

The sail ship of goofy mien was on the way to the Isthmus, whence its passengers would cross to the Pacific and other transportation to California of the gold strike. Most of the miserable passengers had come ashore now. They wanted fit water to drink, they wanted to be clean again, they wanted better food than ships' food, they wanted to rest again. Then the ship would learn new bearings, find out or not find out how it had gotten several hundred miles off course, and sail again.

Angelene Domdaniel recommended that they walk a few short miles along the coast to that place where the Great Thermal Springs goes into the ocean. They could be clean again there. The ship's boats could take on good water there. She would even give them good food there. Angelene mounted her great stallion, now shod and noble in his mind and mien, though tired from the night past, and showed the way. Angelene was colorful in her Sunday best.

So was Celeste in hers, and she rode a pony as fair and blond as herself. Dana was amused as well as delighted at the vision of her. He understood what Angelene had meant when she had spoke of making puns in the colors of the things she wove for her friendly rival. Oh, there was striking incongruity in the glad-rags of Celeste, really clever juxtaposition of color that could only be called punning. Likely Celeste knew it and still liked it.

Not all followed the gay ladies, though. Half a dozen of the citizens of Basse-Terre rang bells and hoisted hasty tavern signs. They would hold open tavern for the men and passengers of the *Gloucester Goose*, which was the name of the goofy old sail ship. Basse-Terre could quickly become a town of half a dozen taverns, whenever a ship such as to make it worth while came into the port. Citizens who did other things, or nothing at all, could become tavern-keepers for an hour or a day or a week. And these United States men who were passengers on the Goose seemed to have money.

They had money, and they numbered more than a hundred. A great deal of gold was carried to California in the early part of the year 1849 by men like these. These men were not dregs or draggles. Mostly they were men of at least small prosperity, and they came as activated agents of sound corporations. Perhaps twenty energetic men of some finance would get together and found a corporation, put a thousand dollars each in it (that was a large sum then); then three out of the twenty men would be selected by lottery to go to California to discover fortune for the

corporation.

They weren't poor men who flocked to the holds of unseaworthy ships to be taken on uneasy voyage around the Horn or to the Isthmus. The poor men hadn't heard much of the thing yet. Now, in early 1849, the news of the gold strike was still on a confidential mouth to ear basis; and men of some wealth hear that sort of news first.

But Angelene had her part of the trade. The filthy men from the ship bathed in the streams and pools that came out of the Great Thermal Springs. Otis Ranker appointed himself to see that everything was conducted with all propriety. He cautioned his fellow United States men that Angelene and Celeste were not loose women, that no word of blasphemy or obscenity might be spoken in their presence, but that the bathing and washing was all right; such was the custom in the place. So the men bathed and washed and swam, appointing guardians from their own groups over their clothing and possessions. They washed their clothes and hung them on tide-water branches to dry in the sun.

They had fresh water to drink and sugarcane rum; they had bananas and fish to eat. And Angelene had also dressed a barrelful of eels.

"Who are you, man?" Dana Coscuin asked the big-cudgel man. "I didn't spare your life to have you follow me like a spook. I killed one. I should have killed two."

"You did kill two. One had a weak head and you may have killed him unknowingly. Oh, I'm O'Boyle."

"You're no such O'Boyle as I've ever seen around Bantry Bay."

"If you had travelled a little, man Dana, you would have seen me around Cobh or Cork or even Clonakilty Bay. I'm a good man who happened to sell his soul to the Devil for a period of years, and has now decided that the period is over with. I'll go on the Goose when she sails now, and I suspect that you will also. Take it as you like. We will go as companions or we will go as strangers, and we may not go to the same place after the Isthmus. Or I'll fight you again. I can take you by daylight. I can take you here and now. Where I am from, we consider the Bantry Bay men as mere boys. How will you have it?"

"The Ifreann, is he dead?" Dana asked without rising to O'Boyle's taunts.

"That I never knew, what manner of fish he is, or what state he is in. You aren't the only one who believes that he's killed him, Dana. I suppose, technically speaking, that you'd have to call him dead. I never saw him in proper flesh myself. Ah, he is a spooky

one, though. I carried your message to him, that you would not see him and would not talk to him. Then I told him that we were quits. 'And do not trouble yourself to follow me or have me followed,' I told him. 'I'll not serve your spookiness again, and I'll not be done in by you either.' 'It's no trouble, really,' he said in that dry way he has. 'I was going to follow the Dana anyhow. I'll follow you both together now.' I left his service, and he owes me wages. I call it quits, and when I call a thing quits, even the Devil had better leave it at quits."

"Angelene, the eels are not dressed the way my cousin Eileen dresses them in Ireland," Dana said.

"No. These are better," she told him.

"One of us must remain here, to drive a nail through the Devil's shadow if it is possible," Charley Oceaan said, "or to strike the wheels from his chariot as the old song has it. I believe that this person had better be myself. This is my own place. I will keep my eye on the estate named Gate of Hell. And I will begin the work in small, after several years of seeing its mixed victories and defeats in large.

"Besides, Dana, there *are* two slain men in the hills, and they will be discovered today or tomorrow. This is a French island, and the French are incurably legalistic. Ye'd better go with the Goose, Dana, and come back another time. Damisa the Leopard will go with you, and Otis will be with you to the other side of the Isthmus. I do not know about this O'Boyle. He may go with the Goose, if he stays in a crowd and is very careful of the way he walks. If he turns back for anything, if he walks alone at all, he will be the third dead man in the hills."

"I've no fear at all of you, black man," O'Boyle said.

"I'll not have Dana trailed by any Ifreann hand or hind," Charley Oceaan maintained.

"Will you not now?" O'Boyle asked with churlish scorn. "Dana will have to be quite a man to keep up the pace, to go where I go. I go my own way in the world. Dana Coscuin would have to be a tall stepper to follow in my tracks."

"It is all right, Charley. Damisa the Leopard will be there," Damisa the Leopard said.

"Where did the man tell you to go, Dana?" Angelene asked him a little later.

"To Guayaquil. How did you know that a man told me to go somewhere?"

"Yes, I suppose Guayaquil would be best. There are so many troublesome places and so few good men to dispatch. Running a



world must be a troublesome business."

"Is there something you'd like to tell me, Angelene? Have you an instruction for me?"

"No. Only that the House of Dana Coscuin and the Bride of Dana Coscuin and the Grave of Dana Coscuin are all here on Basse-Terre."

"The belle of Dana Coscuin is here *aussi*," Celeste said.

There were other events in that day. It is quite likely that Angelene did give Dana an instruction, that she explained a bit more about his mission. After all, she was one of the sources, just as the Black Pope and Brume and Christian Blaye and Catherine Dembinska had been. She had these things, of herself, out of the Earth.

Dana hadn't them yet of himself. He was a slow learner, though a passionate doer. The day hadn't come yet when he would tell a man, 'Go to Torino' or 'Go to Rome' and that man go without question. Dana was the double-hero of this island and of other places, but he was still a boy with strings on him.

"There was mail packet on the *Goose*," Angelene said, "mail from England and from the continent. Some for myself, some for yourself, I take care of it all."

"How take care of it? Can you read, Angelene?"

"Certainly. I can pass a letter across my face and read what is in it, that without opening it. I can also read in proper manner."

"You will not give me my own mail?"

"No, merely tell you what was in it, and what came otherwise. One Kemper (he was of your party) is dead."

"Yes. I felt that blow even before I left Amsterdam. I was fair sure of that."

"One Elaine, who was almost of your party, is not in so much trouble as I believed she was. She killed a man, but there were circumstances. It was not discovered till she was in English port, and she is English."

"Oh, she'd battle, as well as Catherine, as well as yourself."

"Of the others the news is more hazy. It didn't come by mail packet."

"Is Ifreann dead, Angelene?"

"I believe not. You failed to kill him. You must be more careful in these things."

"I swear that I did kill him. I'll not believe that he is alive on this island."

"Oh no, he isn't alive here. These are only shadows and deliriums of himself that he projects here. Those who think they have seen him here have seen only his emanations. I believe that

he is still alive somewhere, unrecovered and irrational. That is why O'Boyle left him. He'd deal with a devil, but not when that devil loses his sureness of movement. We'll know more of these things later."

The *Gloucester Goose* pulled away from Basse-Terre an hour before sundown. All who came on her left on her except two United States men who believed they had discovered a paradise where they could live well on corporation coin. Others who sailed on the *Goose* when she left Basse-Terre were Otis Ranker, Damisa the Leopard, the man named O'Boyle, and Dana Coscuin. There was another man there named Jack Galopade, the man who would like to have tried the new king stallion. "I'd go if I were asked," this Jack said softly. Dana didn't hear him, and Jack didn't go. It was a curious hinging of fate.

The *Goose* went well, for not being seaworthy. She'd been an old whale ship when she was younger, and she could still sail. She went so fast that the worms had not yet made complete havoc of her hull when she arrived at the Isthmus.

Direct from Basse-Terre to Chagres on the Isthmus, thirteen hundred nautical miles and a bit, in twenty days! Otis and Damisa and O'Boyle and Dana had formed a rowdy company by this time. Otis was not sure whether he would go to California or not. He also might go to Guayaquil, foregoing gold for adventure; indeed, both might be found in Guayaquil. Dana still had the child's coffin that he had brought from Amsterdam. His fate was tied to that coffin, and he still found gold coins when he rummaged through the trash of it.

Chagres was a small boom town, and they spent no more than one day there. Up the Chagres River then, by poled canoe, the four of them. There was a long wait, and Dana had to pay more for the trip than the United States men were willing to pay. There were no more than a dozen of the canoes that went each day, and there were probably five hundred United States men from various ships in Chagres waiting to go. This first part of the trip could hardly be made without canoe or other boat, for the land of that part of the Isthmus was unsubstantial and swampy.

Then, onto firm land at Cruces. It was only a twenty mile walk to Panama City over a good trail that had been paved in the Spanish days.

And Panama City was full of United States men waiting for any kind of transportation to anywhere in California. It was a crowded town full of rough men. The United States men drank and sang 'Oh, Susanna' and 'Pretty Nellie Kelly, with the Buck-

Skin Belly.' The Panama City hotel men rubbed their hands and mined gold in their own way.

There was a wait of many months sometimes for any transportation north to California. But returning ships, going back round the Horn for another load of gold-seekers, would sometimes put into Panama City and carry regular traffic on down the South American coast to pay their return costs. And many of these ships would put in again at Guayaquil.

## IV

### ECUADOR OF THE CONDORS

*Hablaban en voz alta, y el anciano  
Con acento vibrante:  
"Vendra," exclamaba, "el heroe predilecto,  
De esta cumbre gigante."*

*All cried in risen voice like dizzy song;  
In trembling tones the Oldest croaks and speaks:  
"Oh he will come, the hero chosen long,  
Out of these cloudy cliffs and giant peaks."*

—Andrade, *The Condor's Nest*

There were many elements gone into the revelatory kinetic vision of the world and its life that Dana Coscuin acquired of a sudden in mid-year 1849 while still some miles off the coast of Ecuador.

Part of it, a very strong element of it, came from the mind of the now dead Kemper Gruenland who had been a sometime companion-at-arms of Dana; though Dana would not receive the full testament of Kemper for another two years.

But big dead Kemper had the urge to tumble his whole teeming mind into Dana's, and now it came with a great surge. The quiet, dreamy, bloody-handed Kemper had never been able to communicate well; he was of slightly stuttering speech, and he spoke little except for his sudden, confused, tide-like spates and floods of words that left incomprehensible driftwood and debris in their wakes and left all his hearers bewildered. It was part of Kemper's difficulty that he never learned to phrase his thoughts well till after he was dead. (It is an anomaly of the present chronicles that Kemper does not make significant appearance in them till after he is dead.) But Kemper's Testament began to come to Dana now, heaving and twisting with a strange intellectual passion, about six months after Kemper had died upside down and under water.

Part of the kinetic vision was the twisting tug of the winds and the ocean currents in that powerful part of the Pacific Ocean where the ship Dana rode now came around for land. It was a heaving and turning of the watery and airy skins of the earth that are very much alive, that are even intelligent, and that generate

and propound their own turbulent messages.

Elements of it coming to Dana were of the older stuff of the past year and years, ripening and being realized in him now. These were the words and the works of certain strong partisans of the Green Revolution: Malandrino Brume with whom Dana had travelled many months; Christian Blaye known to Dana only at the angry shrine in the cluttered room in Hendaye where Christian's skull was one of the three prodigious speaking pieces of peasant art; Catherine Dembinska who had been entirely intellect and passion, and who had been Dana's incredible wife for the last eleven days of her short life.

A recent element of it all had been the earthiness and oceanness of Angelene Domdaniel who received the Green Revelation directly out of the Earth and Sea and communicated it directly with body and body's aura.

A part of it even had been from a very short sermon of the puny priest of Basse-Terre and Capes-Terre. That priest, as it happened, had had the thing incomplete, and part of it he had had wrong. Still, he had a grip on it. He told that the Center, which is Christ, is Everything. He also told that the Eccentric (the off-center) was almost Nothing.

"It is not a nothing. It is ourselves," Dana maintained.

The puny priest had stated that all the eccentrics resembled each other in their weightless noise and in their error. But this did not take into account the intense polarization between the Green Revolution and the Red Revolution, and it was in this polarity that Dana lived. The two did *not* resemble each other; they contradicted each other at every turn. Other eccentrics might be nothing, might be identically nothing; but one of these was the towering positive and the other was the abysmal negative.

"Ride any analogy or any horse one hundred miles in a day, and it will go lame on you," Malandrino Brume had once told Dana.

But the little priest *had* mentioned (though he hadn't sufficiently appreciated it) the kinetic element of the eccentrics, the Angular Momentum. He had even known that the proper name of it was the Life Affair. Ah, the angular momentum of it all!

This angular momentum is appreciated (still a long ways off the Ecuador coast) where the Humbolt Current, which come arrow-straight and strong out of the Antarctic and up the straight South American coast, begins to shatter and twist with its mighty momentum, to twist away from a coast that is no longer straight, that is bulged out in a whirlpool of high mountains. Indeed, this Humbolt (the longest and strongest current in the world) so twists out to ocean here that it lets a warm rain-current from the

north twist inside it to the crooked coast (for which reason the Ecuador coast has rain, as the Peru coast and the upper Chile coast have not).

This angular momentum is appreciated where the wind swirls at the very hub of the world. This is at the equator where the low, north-traveling winds should rise straight up and fold back on themselves and return towards the south polar regions at high elevation. (The ocean currents wish to do the same thing, but they are thwarted.) At the equator also all winds wish to blow from east to west. This is complicated a little when those winds, only a little bit in-shore, have had to tumble down four-mile-high mountains to fulfill their directions. So there is turbulence.

The equatorial westward-traveling winds will return (an eighth of the world further south) as eastward-traveling winds, the Roaring Forties, from their latitude.

There was strong angular momentum of all the elements while Dana Coscuin and his companions were still some miles from the Ecuador coast. There was also strong angular momentum of the intellectual and psychic sort so that the brains of the travelers leaped with ideas as the ocean there leaped with fish. (Those are the fishiest waters in the world where the Humbolt breaks up and turns west.) There was a real swooping down of the mind to take those ideas and inklings on the leap, like the swooping down of the sea birds. (Nowhere are there so many sea birds as over the white Humbolt, that hundred-mile-wide white streak of water in the blue, and as over the turning and break-up of that Humbolt.) It was all waters and winds and fish and birds and minds leaping and tumbling.

One of the leaping ideas on which Dana's mind swooped and fastened was that Ecuador (still over the horizon from them) was the spinning and tumbling hub of the world itself, a whirling and toppling top. And Dana would find that his idea of the land was the correct one. The high mountains there would be dizzy mountains in all meanings. The quakes and the volcanic activity would all be part of the *tourbillon*, the whirlpool, the whirlwind, the whirl-massifs. So would be those bands of intellectual activity in the country, a tumbling and tumultuous activity.

Though never a bookish land, with never any opportunity to be such, Ecuador had for a long while exported intellectuals. This was one the very odd-sounding exports of the country, like vegetable ivory (tagua nut), balsa wood, toquilla straw, and Panama hats. No other country thought to export such things.

But Ecuador had forever been exporting a whole floating and whirling nation of intellectuals, exporting them to all the

provinces of Grand Columbia (Venezuela, Columbia, Panama), and to Peru and Chile, and even to Brazil and Mexico and Argentina. Even in the old Indian days the floating world of intellectuals had come from the Ecuadors (the invigorating coasts and the invigorating high-lands). South America would not have been the same thing without them, would hardly have been anything at all. It had been the strange flights of brain-blown and notions-mad men from Ecuador which had given impetus and yeast to the whole mass.

Dana and his ship-mates had met ebullient Ecuador men long before they came to Ecuador itself; met those strangely-humored men of the easy and sparkling intelligence: those Jews of America, those Romans and Greeks of America, those Irish and French of America, those Parsi and Magi of America.

It was in the company and conversation of one such sparkling man that Dana Coscuin came to the land itself, their ship sliding in on a curious calm by afternoon and night, sliding up the great Guayas estuary and docking without a jolt at the city of Guayaquil at dawn.

"In the small city of Escarpe alone there are nine hundred famous poets," the young man was saying (his name was Milagroso Moreno), "and this out of only one thousand men in the town. In the valleys of Seso there are twenty-nine professors of jurisprudence and thirty doctors of philosophy, and there never a school of any sort within many leagues of the valleys. These men are professors and doctors innately and intuitively and they are unequaled in the world."

"So are we all in Ireland," Dana said. "The meanest hog-slopper there will have nine degrees after his name, and all of them put there by himself. I must see the name of that ship there. I will buy that ship some day."

"You would never buy that ship with talk, Dana," the man named Milagroso told him. "It'll have a high price on it. The name is *La Catalina*."

"The Catherine is her name then? I *will* buy her, and with more than talk."

"She is no good, Dana. She's a whore of a ship."

"Swallow those words again, or fight me," Dana turned on the surprised Milagroso with a rising growl. "She's a high lady and you will not call her any other thing."

"Fight you, Dana? Anywhere, any time. You can be had. But why should you fight me over the reputation of a ship you have never seen before? You are out of your reason sometimes."

That was all true. Dana knew he could be had. Milagroso had a

way of moving, the lithe lazy power. So had Damisa the Leopard. And O'Boyle and Otis Ranker were large and mighty men. Dana was really the least of the five of them, and yet this was no way for a hero to be thinking. He would have whipped them all at once or one at a time if the need of it ever rose. He'd use trickery, he'd even use his wits. He was not hero for nothing. But he wasn't in a hero mood this morning, and really these were a bunch of rough and ready men with whom he had been travelling.

"I will have that ship, Milagroso." Dana still insisted. "When I sail from Ecuador I will sail as master and owner of her. She'll be my barque and my bride."

"Nice, very nice," Milagroso said. "I also have been in love with ships. It is a more passionate thing, it is even a more fleshy thing, than to be in love with the ladies. As to myself, Dana, I am presently a citizen of Guayaquil. I am a free-trading, free-spending, and free-thinking man of this open and light-minded port. I live the drifting and brilliant life, and I see my country destroyed by the prodigal brilliance and easy connivance of my own sort. We'd deal with the devil for our pleasure; we eat all the substance of the poor; we mock our Maker; and we join the Lodges. Next year, however, I will change completely and be a different sort of man. I am ambivalent and I can make these changes."

"And why will you change, Milagroso?" Dana asked him. "I like you as you are even though you are as worthless as you are pleasant. What sort of man will you change into?"

"I will become once again a citizen of Quito which is the most opposite thing in the world to a citizen of Guayaquil. I will change because my cousin Gabriel Morena, the Christian Hercules, returns from Europe next year. I will change because his coming always brings me to my senses. What is in the child's coffin that you carry with you, Dana? The bones of a child?"

"Yes. It's a hair-raising fact, but I have come on a dozen or more child's bones while rummaging through its trash. There didn't use to be so many of them. I believe that there were none at all of them at first. In time, I suppose, there will be a complete set of them."

"Yes, it would be a little hair-raising to have the child become more complete and more articulated. Is there something wrong about the child that you can't bury him in consecrated ground and must carry him with you?"

"Something wrong with him, yes, Milagroso; but I suppose I could bury him in consecrated ground, whether or not he is a person requiring burial. But he is as ambivalent as are you



yourself. I do not believe that you yourself have a complete set of bones either. I am sure that there is more of you yet to appear. As to the child, it may be that he doesn't know which city he is citizen of either; it may be that I must carry him around till he decides. Frankly, Milagroso, I don't know why I carry the little coffin around. And the way that I acquired it, when I remember back on the thing, seems improbable. Ah, she is a beauty though! Three masts and a funnel!"

"Oh, the ship? I could lust for her, Dana, but I couldn't love her as you seem to."

Milagroso Moreno led them all (Dana, Otis Ranker, Damisa the Leopard, and O'Boyle) to a seamen's lodging house where he seemed to be known. They went there with their sea-bags and locker-trunks and coffers, hiring strong and great-breasted young boys to help them carry all the load.

"The boys are from the high hills," Milagroso said. "Because of the altitude there they have developed very deep chests. Almost everyone here has lived in the mountains also. Almost everyone in the mountain country has lived on the coasts. We of Ecuador are like the ocean currents. We make a great circuit. There is a long season in us, a four or five year long season, and we go and return in that time. We are none of us of the one region only. We would be only half people if we didn't take part of both these lives. In many of the other countries there are only such half people."

They all stowed their baggage in rooms at the lodging house. They paid a little money to the lady who ran the rooms. Then they went out again.

"I will go and visit the flesh-pots," O'Boyle said. "Have a care, Dana. Have a care, Moran." He always called Moreno Moran. He twisted many names to an Irish form.

"The flesh-pots are hardly simmering so early in the morning, O'Boyle," Milagroso called after him. Then to Dana, "I believe he is really seeking employment. He is a soldier for hire and he will be hired. He'll be competent. He says that he has served one of the greatest plotters of them all."

"He has that," Dana smiled. "How old is this cousin Gabriel Moreno?"

"He is twenty-eight, four years older than myself. He is a marvel."

"I knew a man of that name and that age last year," Dana said. "If he was a marvel then he kept it a secret, from myself at least. If he is the Christian Hercules he has kept it even a deeper secret. He doesn't look like a Hercules. Where has he his title from?"

"He has it from the future, Dana. As yet I am the only one who

calls him by that title. He learns late. He grows. I myself will proclaim him, as will others. I will be John the Baptist to his Christ. You smile, Dana, why?"

"You are a light minded playboy, Milagroso. You'd not be John of the desert, living on grasshoppers and clothed in camel hair."

"Why, Dana, my shawl is llama wool, and the llama is cousin of the camel. And I do eat grasshoppers, preserved and coated in chocolate, of course. They are a delicacy here. But John was not always an ascetic. He was a wanton playboy till he felt the near coming of his own cousin Christ. Then he changed."

A man, a well-garbed and wealthy older man, was calling after one or the other of them.

"Count Cyril," the man called.

Dana felt an old ghost or shadow stirring inside himself. It was almost as if the Count himself was in his gullet and trying to answer. More odd, Dana sensed that Milagroso was startled. It was as if a ghost had stirred in that companion too.

"What is wrong with that old *hidalgo*?" Milagroso wondered aloud. "It isn't a name that one speaks in the street. Though I am distantly of the Count's kindred, yet he is a man at least three times my age. Also I believe that I do not resemble the Count at all. This man knows me. How could he make such mistake? He must be morning-mad."

"Maybe there is another Count Cyril than the one who comes to your mind," Dana suggested doubtfully.

"No. There is only one Count Cyril," Milagroso said with finality, and Dana knew it was true.

"Count Cyril!" the older man was still calling as he came to them at a near run. But it was to Dana and not to Milagroso that he came. He put his hands on Dana's shoulders and all but embraced him.

"Ah, my Count!" the man cried. "I had no idea that you were here." But then he halted and was confused and apologetic. "But no, you cannot be he. You are far too young a man. And you haven't his appearance, only his air. I'm sorry. You are not the Count at all."

"Don't say that I am not the Count at all," Dana spoke with a cheerful liveliness. He was a little surprised at his own words, though; he listened in some wonder for what himself would say next, for the way he would finish it. "It may be, man, that I am a little bit of the Count after all."

"Ah yes," the old man agreed. "His stamp is on you. I would like to speak with you about him further but, as you know, that is not allowed. A large good morning to you, my fine young man, and to

you also Milagroso. I suppose that my eyes will never again behold the Count in life, but I did have a sudden hope there for a moment."

The old man left them then. Dana also would have liked to talk to him further on the subject; but he also knew that it was not allowed. But why was it not?

And Milagroso Moreno was looking at Dana with real awe.

"Dana, Dana, I wouldn't have believed it of you," he said. "You also belong to the special ones. I was born so, but you are so by the Count's own choice. Ah, you are a *predilecto*! Each time any one of us is discovered to another one we enlarge the world, even if we must not speak of such things."

They went to breakfast at a rather superior place. The establishment had style, and the people who came to breakfast there had style even though some of them were barefoot. There was an uncommonness about the common people here. Dana could feel the quick wit and the bright intelligence of the folk. There are lands that lack this easy enchantment, this arty way of doing everything, even of eating breakfast, the bantering recognition that is based on true cognition. Ecuador wasn't at all lacking in the things, in particular it was not lacking here in Guayaquil.

They began the breakfast with coffee (why was it better coffee than that of Basse-Terre? Because it was grown on higher mountains and under a steeper sun) and *semita* or Jew-bread. They had fish called Bagre, and apples. No, the apples didn't grow on the level of Guayaquil. They grew three thousand feet higher up, but one hadn't to go very far to come to such altitude. In Ecuador, every crop and every humor may be found merely by ascending or descending.

Dockmen who had worked all night were drinking the brandy named *chimpin*. There were shop girls, smarter than those of Paris, eating quick breakfasts and laughing. Prettier than those of Paris they were, and with a more cosmopolitan air about them. After all, Guayaquil was a more cosmopolitan city than Paris. You do not see so many Chinese or Negroes in Paris; you do not see thirty different kinds of Indians there; you do not see so many United States people, hardly as many Italians, not nearly so many Spanish or Catalan folks—in the very early morning you do not even see so many Frenchmen in Paris as in Guayaquil.

Brown rice out of brown pottery bowls, but the spoons and the forks were silver (Ecuador was still a big silver country); the people were not fastidious about their spoons and forks (that

which defiles one does not go in by spoon or fork).

"You have not eaten till you have eaten llama," a girl said, and she gave Dana a big piece of meat on her own fork. "Is it not good?" she asked. "Does it not taste like camel? You are from Europe from the *suco* (blond) look of you, so you will know. Does it not taste like your own camel?"

"It is good. It is like goat and unlike sheep," Dana said. "I have never eaten camel."

"Oh, but I thought surely you were from Europe where there are camels," the girl said.

Everybody in Ecuador was very friendly. Everybody liked every other body. (Why then had there been nine civil wars in less than nine years? Why were there two different civil wars going on at that very time?)

"Dana, do you know how Ecuador has its name?" Milagroso asked him.

"Why, I suppose the Spanish named it Ecuador because the Ecuador (the Equator) runs exactly through the middle of it," Dana said lamely, feeling a trick question.

"Then why was it called Ecuador before the first Spanish came here?" a shop girl asked. "Why was it called with that name a thousand years before the Spanish came?" She was table-mate to the girl who had given llama meat to Dana to eat.

"Was it so?" Dana asked.

"Indeed it was," Milagroso assured him. "It was, in the Quechua language, three words and not one: *yek*, and *gua*, and *durra*."

"What do the words mean?" Dana asked.

"Oh, there's dispute about that. Some say one thing, some say another. But the words of the name are very old."

"I myself talk Quechua," said the girl who had given Dana llama, "as this charlon, this Spanish-blood dude you are with does not. I can say that there are no such words in Quechua. We do not make words that sound like that in Quechua. The words are in one of the other languages, I think in Quito. What they mean is 'Fair-haired man in green shirt bite on old joke,'" and she giggled the special giggle that is named *chachara* in Ecuador.

"The country really was named something like Ecuador long before the Spanish came," Milagroso said seriously, "but nobody knows what the name meant. The name was already attached to the country before either the Quechua or the Quito Indians arrived here."

The shop girls had finished their breakfast. They slipped their feet into their sloughed-off sandals, rose suddenly with a clatter, and ran for it. Milagroso was not playboy for nothing, and Dana

could catch any idea as soon as it flicked through any mind near his.

They caught and kissed the girls before ever they'd reached the doorway. Dana gave the little Quechua-llama girl the kiss that is called *zafado* in Ecuador. She stroked and patted his green silk shirt, and the other girl did also. Chinamen had begun a silkworm culture in Ecuador, but they hadn't yet such silk as this.

The girls went off to work in the shops or wherever. And Dana had already begun to like the friendly ways of Guayaquil and Ecuador.

"It's a greener land than Ireland—and a closer place than home," he sang to the tune of 'My Name is Dana Coscuin.'

A mixed-blood man, a mixed-type man (he looked half simpleton and half sage) was talking that evening or the next to Dana Coscuin and Otis Ranker and Damisa the Leopard and the man named O'Boyle.

"You have asked the question that I cannot answer, Dana," he said. "Why have the most friendly of all people been killing each other for a number of years? They cannot give any reason for it; I, who am one of them, cannot. We kill each other in all friendliness and cheerfulness, but we kill—we have left off being the salt of the world and have become the saltpeter against each other. How has it happened to us?"

Otis Ranker looked over his shoulder to be sure there was no stranger there. "Have you considered that this may be hand and hoof of the Devil himself?" he asked. Otis was a backwoods boy in his origins. A more urbane United States man might never have thought of that plausible explanation.

"Of course I have thought of it," the native man said. (All men are native of somewhere and thus all are equally native, you say? No, no, some are more native than others, more new-born, more natural-born. This man was true native.) "From our hills and mountains and high plains and shores there have been dug out, for very many years now, more than half a million statues and statuettes and replicas and heads. There is a similarity in these. The faces are all of one sort, the figures are all of one sort, but they are not the sort of any Indian or other men known. They are a different creature than man, yet they were originally made (is my theology sound here?) in the same image. Every one of them bears the face of a devil, or of the Devil. There is some speculation (scribblers' speculation, what we call 'ink-well speculation') as to who carved all these.

"Nobody carved them. Why should they be carved? They are the

heads and faces of the devils forever in the rocks of the land. When the rocks are shattered into pieces, the face of the devil is still on every piece. It is the same as when a looking glass is broken into pieces: every small piece of it will still reflect the entirety of what is there to be reflected.

"Oh, but we bury the devil-rocks with greenery, with green grass and green rice and new green wheat. This has always been the remedy—to flood it all over with waves of growing green. In the more blessed times it works well. But there come perverse years (we have had five very perverse ones in a row) when all the fruit of the greenery still shows the devil-face. It is on every grain of rice, and every mealed grain of wheat or corn. He's in every banana and guava and grape. We were meant to be the lively light of the world, or at least of this long Pacific coast. Well, we are still that lively light, but lately we liven up in wrong shapes and wrong faces."

"How much do you pay?" the mercenary O'Boyle asked.

"Nothing at all," the native man told him. "You must even provide yourself with shoes and gun, and food for five days. Later you will not be given anything, but you will be shared with. If you have anything left in your pockets you are expected to empty them into ours. We pay all that we can afford; it is a little bit less than nothing."

"That's plenty," the mercenary O'Boyle said surprisingly. "I've already provided myself with those things. Open your pockets, man." And O'Boyle poured a small stream of gold and silver, and paper notes, into the pockets of the mixed-blood man. Then he clapped a derby hat on his head (it was one of the derby hats that the Ecuador Indians have always worn, not one of those that European and United States dandies wore; though the two were almost identical).

"Straight east and upward is it?" O'Boyle asked, "until I come to men who look right to me? And if I don't look right to them, they'll kill me on the spot for my thanks?"

"That is the case of it," the mixed man said.

"I couldn't ask for a better deal," the heretofore so mercenary O'Boyle cried cheerfully. "Be you all on the right side when we meet again, my friends!" O'Boyle gave a bright wink out of his rather coarse fat face and went out into the night.

"I'll give you a little gold," Otis Ranker told the mixed man. "Almost, but not quite, all that I have." He gave gold in little leather sacks to the man. "Later in the night I will start up that way myself," Otis said, "I will look at it, and I will make up my mind. I want to do a right thing here. I've never done a wrong

thing, but I've gone about some things wrong."

Otis Ranker walked out into the night as O'Boyle had done. Otis was a stiff and dour man, but he had liked the green cheerfulness of this country.

"Dana and I will visit the Eagle," Damisa the Leopard said.

"In this country he is called the Condor," the mixed man told them.

"What strange bird do we go after?" Dana asked. "I've not been told I would visit any steep bird."

"You are told it now, Dana," said Damisa the Leopard.

"You are told it, man," said the mixed man.

Dana had learned a little about the situation and recent history of Ecuador. There had been two very opposite men as rulers in the years following independence from Spain. They were the strange friend-enemies: the conservative and clerical Jose Flores, and the liberal and radical Vincent Rocafuerte; they were the Black and the Red. ("They are like myself and Ifreann," Dana said, "save that I could not call either of them 'Son of the Devil,' and save that they made a better accommodation.")

They *had* made an accommodation. They had alternated in office for some years. They had kept the peace. And the whole country in its whole effort and thought changed every several years when they changed office. It was like a tide that flows one way for a while, and then reverses itself. It was always a cliff-brink thing, but it didn't tumble the country. The land thrived in green wealth and intellectual storm. It was one of those exceptional, non-static, excellent eras.

Flores and Rocafuerte grew old, lost the shrewd grips of their hands and minds, and were pushed aside by their own followers. But the followers of the two men could not find that old accommodation. The parties that the two men had founded had (now that their strong founding influence was gone) launched a fifteen year civil war, or perhaps a series of fifteen one year civil wars. About a third of this period had now gone by. Ecuador, which had been the most peaceful (though with a violent and dynamic peace) of all the Latin American countries, had now become the most bloody.

It was all sheer insanity. And Ecuador had boasted such an oversupply of sanity and intellect that it had exported these two things (packaged in the little round casks that are called men's heads) as it would export any other novel commodities. Ecuadorians were everywhere in the Americas, they were leading men everywhere, but at home they could find no sane leadership

at all.

The heads of the two parties were Guayaquil, the ultra-liberal port city; and Quito, the immeasurably conservative fortress in the high mountains.

"Why not simply let the country fall into two halves?" Dana asked an acquaintance. "It seems that it would naturally fall into two halves, geographically, economically, politically, intellectually. I myself could draw a line where it would fall neatly into two halves."

"So could I," the acquaintance said. "The line of division is clear enough."

"And then you could be two neighboring countries at peace with each other," Dana continued as though the idea were new in him. "Neither of you has anything that the other wants."

"Only the blood and the soul," the acquaintance smiled. "You do not understand at all, traveler. Each one of us has these two things inside, and we are persons who dislike being split in two down the middle. I myself have lived in Quito five times and in Guayaquil five times, have been five times a conservative and clerical of the highlands, have been five times a liberal and radical of the coast. I feel it stirring in me again. I sit here and curse the Quito men and all their fruits to you, for I hate them with a hatred. But the sand is running in the little time-keeper in my head, and before another month has passed I will go up to Quito again. There I will be a Quito man again, a conservative and a clerical; and I will sit and curse the Guayaquil men and all their fruits to some listener, then I will hate them with a hatred. Without this duality in us we would die.

"Go out on the roads and trails and paths and you will see it. Rich people, middle people, poor people going up from the Guayaquil regions to work and live in the Quito regions, and you will see their faces and bearings change as they go. And you will see the same number (*exactly* the same number, I tell you) of rich and middle and poor people coming down from the Quito regions to work and live in the Guayaquil regions. Ah!—how their faces and gaits will change as they come down. Even the poor people will make these changes five or six times in their lives. No, no, traveler, do not ask us to cut ourselves in two. We're of this alternating and double nature; we'll die if we're cut in two."

"How many times have *you* been alternately a Quito man and a Guayaquil man?" Dana asked the mixed blood native now with a smile, remembering that other conversation with another man.

"More times than I can count," the man said. "But I am beyond



that now. I must be both of those things at once; the world must be both of them at once, for Ecuador is an imperfect miniature of the world. It is the whole thing we have talked about this evening, that we must be both these things at once. Now I tell you, and your mottled friend tells you, to climb up to the condor's nest. And still you sit there. Why?"

Dana and Damisa the Leopard had been traveling upland for three days. This was a living land, a smoking land, a rumbling land. They were already into quite high land by choice (there was a lower valley way they could have taken), more than a third of the distance to Quito, right at Guaranda, and with the more than 20,000 feet high Chimborazo a few miles to their starboard.

The earth spoke constantly; it spoke as it had spoken at Sinai and Olympus, at Ararat and at Athos. There was true theophany in these high meadows and high mountains, always, every day and hour of the life there. They were never free from the feel of earthquake, never free from the mountain sickness named *soroche* that accompanies tremors in these high places, never free from the sight and sound and smell of volcanoes.

Dana knew now why the people of high Ecuador were always clerical and conservative; they must always feel themselves in the presence of God and the fear of God. They make a constant liturgy of their life.

But they hadn't much fear, apparently, of anything else. They seemed a bold and easy people, a smiling people (not a giggling people like those of Guayaquil and the lowlands). They had a serenity and a deep-chested strength and elation. They walked in grace. They had *better* walk in grace; it was holy and quaking land that they walked on.

But how should these people be of an appearance different from that of the lowland people if, as it was said, they changed from lowland to highland folk half a dozen times in their lives? Well, they did make changes in themselves as they went up or down the trails. It was as if one light was turned off in them and another sort of light was turned on. They made startling changes in their appearance.

Dana had noticed it in Damisa the Leopard, and Damisa had noticed it in Dana. Both had become very much deeper of chest in just three days, for they had panted in glorious strain for all the hours of that time. They had gone up through nine different terraces of greenery; they had been, really, in nine different countries; they had breathed nine grades of more pure but also more diffuse air. They had become at the same time more pale

and more ruddy and less brown (it was only the spots or blotches of Damisa that changed color). They moved with greater vigor and alertness, and became tireder with a deeper tiredness. They ate fruit and meat with a new appetite, and drank water insatiably wherever water flowed. They were much livelier in their waking hours, they were even much livelier in their sleeping hours.

They went light, or they'd never have gone so quickly. Dana had left the coffer, the child's coffin, with a land-lady in Guayaquil. He had also made her delegate or proxy over some of his affairs. The land-lady was lawyer as well as renter. Now Dana carried only a small shoulder-pack (it protects the nape and the shoulders and the upper spine from sudden attack from behind one, and it leaves the arms and hands free), wore a pistola in his belt and had a handknife inside his shirt. He also carried a number of handy things, besides his brains, in his hat. Dana's hats (the present one was an Indian derby) were always curiously packed, often to the saving of his head, and this not entirely accidental.

Damisa the Leopard seemed to carry nothing at all with him. Yet he could produce anything needed at a moment's notice. Dana had seen this mottled man drag out of his raggedy coat a small live cock, a dozen eggs (Damisa swore that they were cocks' eggs), two steaming bowls of meat stew, a flask of wine, a still-hot baked potato, five bananas, a poncho blanket for Dana on one very cold night in the open, a wooden flute-whistle which he gave to a little boy who asked for a gift, a saddlers' needle, a live coal (when Dana wished to start a fire one morning), a coil of woven hemp rope with eyelets when Dana wished to scale a difficult cliff to avoid a long trek around. (But Damisa had never been in mountains before—how had he known to have such things? Had he not been? Are there no mountains in Africa?) The man was like a magician in the things he could produce. (Among the Hausa of Africa, *mottled* persons are always trained as magicians. But if they become too proficient in their magic, so as to cause real alarm among the tribesmen, they are taken and sold away as slaves.) One could hardly go wrong on a journey with Damisa as traveling companion.

It is in these stimulating middle altitudes, high above the coast's low-lands, not yet to the extreme peaked heights, that the Ecuadorian intellectual experience often explodes. It may come as an emotional and near delirious excitement, a strange and ghostly cognitional and intuitional outpouring, a true change of life for those ascending or descending. It is sudden and sustained

and startling.

Great works have been produced by travelers in travelers' inns in Riobamba and Ambato and Latacunga; have been produced in short weeks, or even in short days and nights. Some angel of the ways ambushes mortal travelers in these places and gives them immortal moments. Nor is this experience limited to Ecuadorians in their traveling changes from one form to another. It has happened to certain Europeans, von Humbolt and others, that they were completely overwhelmed by the insights and revelations that they received in these regions.

Dana Coscuin had his own intellectual and intuitional encounters and excitements here in the stimulating altitudes. Damisa the Leopard had his also, but he was more privately entranced; Dana near burst with his own. But Dana's excitements were accompanied sometimes by a dizziness and weariness, whereas the Leopard was incapable of weariness. Besides that, Dana's eyes hurt, the fine eyes that had never failed him. His eyes were cloudy by day and fiery by night, and he kept seeing prodigies on neighboring heights. Prodigies, or a single prodigy endlessly repeated. This prodigy was the repeated vision of a man or a creature named Ifreann Chortovitch, the person that Dana had killed on the borders of Congress Poland a year before. Only a year before? Perhaps it was more than that, perhaps it was two.

Ifreann the Son of the Devil moved with the same stilted stride that he had used in those foothills south of Krakow, but he wasn't now wearing the high jack-boots that Dana had killed him in. Ifreann was wearing some sort of Indian foot-wrapping. He moved on a course parallel to that of Dana and Damisa. Sometimes he waved to them, but Dana disdained to wave back. One does not wave greeting to a dead man.

"Who is he?" Damisa asked Dana. "Brothers of him I have known. Him I have not. I didn't know that there was another one so powerful in that family. Oh, but he is a big wild one!"

"There is nobody there," Dana insisted. "It is only a private hallucination, a *mearbhall* of mine. You cannot see him."

"Can I not see him, Dana? But I see him well and have marked him all day. Strong as he is, he cannot pick a way as well as we can. He is flamboyant, and he picks hard sites from which he may be viewed. For this reason he tires more quickly than we do. We will have a few hours rid of him now, for he must back-track, though he doesn't know it. And you are mountain-dizzy, Dana. We will go to the inn here and eat and rest."

It was with a certain compassion and gentleness that Damisa took Dana Coscuin into the inn at Pillaro which is a little beyond

Ambato. Dana didn't quite understand Damisa's concern for him. Damisa was clearly the more concerned of the two. It really seemed to be Damisa and not Dana who was mountain-dizzy.

But the inn was reassuring to Damisa. That mottled man stamped on its stone floor as if to assure himself of its solidity, and he was reassured. It was the sort of place that is called *tambo* in that country, a post-house where coaches stopped and horses were changed, and also a good hotel for people. This *tambo* inn was more solid than the mountains it was built upon. It was a pleasant, but not boisterous, place. It was a religious foundation, or it had the lean sharp flavor of one. There was a brother of the Viajeros order in attendance, a Green-Robe. There were two married couples who managed and served the place.

The travelers, except for two of them, were couples or families going up or down the roads. Most of them were not poor people; they were well outfitted and funded for their journeys. They met together easily, they prayed at table, and they ate well. They had brandy with the meat, and wine with the bread course, and then more brandy after the meal was cleared. But they were not toppers. They were sober people drinking against the night's coming chill. They had tobacco provided to them there, and pipes for those who did not have such. They sang a little, in small groups, or singly. Dana sang to them in one style, and Damisa the Leopard in another. They had no instruments of a proper sort, though one small girl had what seemed no more than a long-necked gourd with strings on it.

The men argued politics and theology and the investment of money. There was some discussion about Christ's own politics—would he have been a Black or a Red in the present context? There was more discussion of Christ's own position on the matter of investment. He had not believed in idle money, in the burying of talents in the ground, that was sure. But the man who contended that by this scorn for burying money in the ground Christ meant to oppose investment of money in land was opposed by most of those present, and he justified his arguments badly.

Christ had recommended the planting of vineyards (that was practical at a two-thousand feet lower altitude; it was not practical here) and the building of vats and wine presses. But He hadn't, apparently, been in favor of building large barns. The Spanish had loved large barns but they had been mistaken in building them in Ecuador. Large barns are for regions where the seasons accord with the time of year, not with the altitude.

Christ had blessed fishing enterprises, but where had He ever blessed guano enterprises? Did He more approve of the rapid and

sophisticated investment of the coastal regions, or of the more solid and measured investments of the highlands? Was He a fast-money man or a slow-money man, that was the question.

He had a clear love of boats, one man argued, and that implied a love of larger ships and of shipping. Oh yes, but He had been a boat-man and a hill-man at the same time, Dana pointed out.

He had been of the mixed-blood province of Galilee, a lady said, and that was a province of sharpers and fast-money men, a place where the Greeks and the Jews honed their wits on each other, and crafted and manufactured and traded with an openness that was not understood by the Jerusalem Jews with their horny hands tight on their shekels. He'd have been a fast-money man.

"Not so," said a heavy-bearded man who'd have to be more Spanish than Indio or Negro, who seemed in fact to be a little bit Jewish or Greek himself. "He'd not have gone into the desert if He'd been a fast-money man; they just don't do that, unless for mineral."

"We haven't any desert," the lady said. "Only the poor countries of Peru and Chile have desert. Our equivalent is the volcanic peaks. He'd have gone up to the condors' nests to pray, as the Condor does even now. But when He came down He'd still be a fast-money man. The multiplication of the loaves and fishes—that story is misunderstood. It had to do with an investment so fast (one day by one account, no more than three days by another) and of such a high return that you whistle when you think of it. I believe that it was a deal in fish futures and barley futures. I wish I'd had money in on that one from the start."

They talked of the continuing civil wars. Most of the travelers had been on each side several times. They talked of the Indios and of the Europeans. They talked of plantations and of plantation reform, and that brought them to talk of invested lies.

"It is the men of the lodges who own it all," said the man who had argued for ships and shipping. "They lie that it is the Church that owns it all; nevertheless it is they themselves who have looted the Church, and now the Church owns nothing. The men of the lodges claim their lie is privileged; they wrap themselves in this lie as in a mail coat and are unassailable."

"I myself am a man of the lodges," the bearded man said bluntly. "We do claim privilege for our stand and we will shove it down your throats. I myself don't own it all, but I own a lot of it. I wish that I owned it all."

They talked about the Condor.

"He isn't much, he isn't much at all," the lady said. "He's a bare-necked and wretched bird without enough feathers to cover him.

It's said that everyone who goes up to him should bring a few feathers along to help the poor Condor cover his nakedness."

"Then why are *you* going up to visit him?" a quieter and more pinched-in lady asked.

"Oh, I have plenty of feathers to spare," the less quiet lady said.

"You can find the Condor?" Dana asked her.

"Travel with me in the morning, boy," she said. "We come up to him in three days."

They all went to bed a full hour before the middle of the night, except for the late ones still arriving. Dana and Damisa the Leopard slept in a small room with two other unfamilied men: a poor and dim-witted Spanish sort, and a rich-seeming Indio. This was often the state of the two folk, popular error to the contrary. One of the married ladies who served the house offered them a candle, but Dana said there was no need. He took a candle and flint out of his hat. He didn't need the flint. Damisa the Leopard took live coal and then flame out of his pocket and lighted the candle.

"*Payasos*, clowns," the serving lady laughed, and left the four of them there.

They made a wood fire—it was quite cold in that altitude. They had four monk's cots in a small room. All four men slept clothed and with a blanket provided for each; yet they would still sleep cold.

"Dreams out of the ivory gate, and visions before midnight," old Thomas Browne wrote. Dana's visions were out of both the ivory gate and the horn gate, and they were of a man who was supposed to dead. His visions overflowed him so that the others in the room suffered from them also. Damisa the Leopard shivered nearby, not entirely from the cold.

Well, what was the case with the creature Ifreann?

"I am alive," Ifreann himself had said. "Wake and see. Come and put your hand ..."

"I believe that you failed to kill him," Angelene had said. "Oh no, he isn't alive here. These are only some shadows and deliriums of him that he projects here."

"That I never knew, what manner of fish he is, or what state he is in," O'Boyle had said. "I never saw him in proper flesh myself."

"I didn't know that there was another one so powerful in that family," Damisa the Leopard had said. "Oh, but he is a big wild one! Can I not see him, Dana? But I see him well, and have marked him all day."

"There is nobody there," Dana had insisted. "It is only a private

hallucination of mine."

But there *was* somebody there. There was a giant coming there and his steps made the mountain ring like iron. This was a giant of a devil who had risen out of his death, who had risen out of his own rot and out of the earth, and walked again. What matter if he were alive or not? A dead giant who walks is fearful enough. And the sounding of his walk was loud enough and clear enough now.

Ifreann had always sent a strong aura before him and he sent it now. Damisa the Leopard whimpered in his light sleep. Damisa had known the brothers of this man and he knew their scorching red powers. The poor Spanish man mumbled "Tigre, tigre" fearfully. The rich Indio sat up and whispered "It is only one of the miscarven stone devils who has burst out of the earth and walks the night. They do this sometimes. Remember that they are no more than stone."

Dana lay in real fear, unable to wake, unable to sleep in proper fashion; he was delirious and dizzy and full of dread.

Then it broke apart in a noise like cliffs shattering and whole mountains whooping and falling down. The whole *tambo* inn shook and sounded, and the enormously loud and crude presence had entered with clattering bloody laughter and minor breaking of glass and tearing of wood. The much louder and grosser reality broke its own ghost to pieces and sent it over the hills to its own place.

Dana sat up and laughed somewhat sourly, somewhat unpleasantly, yet with a returned gusto. Something unliked but lively had returned. Ifreann was alive; and Dana was not afraid of him alive. He wasn't even afraid of him risen from the dead, now that he thought of it. The very enormity and coarseness of the arrival had put it all back into context.

Dana had whipped this giant creature once; he had whipped him more than once; he had left him for dead. And he'd leave him for dead again one of these days, and he'd make sure that the thing was triply dead.

It was Ifreann himself in the inn; and O'Boyle, who seemed to be again in his employ, was with him. The two of them made a boisterous ado of it, demanding to be fed and bedded (it was quite late in the night now); and of course they were cared for in that hospitality house.

In the middle of the noise of their supper, a lady, the lady who would take Dana to the Condor, had risen and tongue-lashed them severely and told them to shut up. She may have had some effect. Ifreann could always recognize another elemental force, and this lady was such. But he noised it up again after a little

while; so Dana called out in high and carrying thunder for him to close his bloody mouth and let them all sleep.

"It is the Dana!" Ifreann howled. "I will be in in a very little bit and we shall see whose bloody mouth is closed." And after a short while Ifreann and O'Boyle came into the room where the four unfamilied men slept.

"Hullo, Dana," he said mildly, but still with a boom in his voice. "Have you not even a candle to offer the Son of Darkness?"

Dana raised a candle from the floor (there was still floor light from the wood fire). Damisa the Leopard reached out a flame and lit it. He had not got the flame from the wood fire, but neither Ifreann nor O'Boyle noticed that he had not. Ifreann set the candle on a sideboard there. This big creature would never sleep in the dark. He turned the inadequate Spanish man out of his cot and onto the floor, and lay down in his place.

Dana rose in anger and turned Ifreann out onto the floor. "Take your own bed again," he told the frightened man. "He will not bother you." And to Ifreann he said, "you will leave him in peace. He is a good man, which you would not understand. You two are the late arrivals and you two will sleep on the floor."

Ifreann stretched out pleasurably on the floor where he was, but O'Boyle argued.

"I will have me a bed," he said. "I will have the bed of one of you."

"You will not have mine," Damisa said. "You have traveled with me and you know me. You will not have that of the Indio. You will not have that of Dana. And Dana will not permit you to have the bed of the other man; neither will I. If the giant could not take it, you cannot."

O'Boyle lay down on the floor grumbling. Ah, he'd slept on plenty of harder places than that floor. It was just that he was a man who tested the ambient at every encounter.

"Dana, I lay for three days in the foot-hills where you had left me, and I lay for six months in a pest-house in Krakow," Ifreann said conversationally after Dana believed he had drifted off into snorting sleep. "I was out of my wits and in a hellish delirium most of that time, and I projected some of that delirium onto you. I'll not forgive you for any of it, Dana. It is to the death between us forever. The pleasure of your company is a rare thing I admit, and I intend to enjoy it in Hell forever. When I do kill you, and I *will* kill you, I will be sure that you are out of grace at the time. I'm unable to weigh you at the moment, yet you're easy enough to weigh for any man or devil who is rested and in his wits. If you are not out of it now, I will wait a little. The only sure thing about



you is that you fall from this grace often; the only sure thing about me is that I'll slay you when I'm sure that you're fair fallen. It may be that I'll kill thee at the coming dawn."

The lady was shaking Dana, and Damisa the Leopard was already on his feet.

"Come along, boy Dana," she said. "The dawn is coming quickly now. The big devil is asleep and so were you. Come quickly. It's three days' travel to the condor's nest."

Dana went out with her and Damisa to the common room. Big Ifreann still talked in his sleep, or in his careless state of inattention: "It is I and thou, Dana, and the wonderful blood in the gutters. Did I not promise you a particularly enjoyable springtime in Paris? Did I not promise you excellent shooting in the Eastern Marches in the autumn? And did I not produce both, did I not, Dana?"

Dana closed the door on the sleeping, talking, devil giant. He breakfasted with the lady and with Damisa the Leopard. She had packs made of their own baggage and of hers. They shouldered these and went out on the three day's road to the condor's nest.

## V

### MY SHIP AND MY BRIDE

*The way of a ship in the sea,  
The way of a man with a maid.*

—Proverbs

It was mid-morning of the first day before Dana thought to ask the lady her name. By that time they had traveled seven miles or two *leguas*, two old Spanish leagues.

"I am Dama Valiente Tirana," she said. "This is all of my name that we will use."

"Had you not a husband at table last night?" Dana asked. "Where is he?"

"Like myself, he is an early riser," Valiente said. "He goes on errand down to Guayaquil. I go to the mountains. But we are never really separated, we two."

It is possible that the lady was a great beauty. There is no way of telling. A lady is a great beauty when one hears someone say of her 'She is a great beauty,' otherwise not. Dana had not heard this of her yet, but he suspected it. She was somewhat older than Dana.

"Yes, I am older than you, boy Dana," she said. (It wasn't so much that Dana met seeress after seeress on his travels; it was more that he had a transparent head on him and his thoughts and his unspoken words were easily read through it.) "I have a son near who is already come to man's estate," she said. "He is within five years of your own age. You will meet him I suppose, if neither of you is chopped down first."

"On which mountain does the Condor nest anyhow, Dame Valiente?"

"You will not need to know the names of the mountains, young Dana."

"But I do know their names. I ask the names of mountains just as I ask the names of persons; I'll not be stranger to them. There is Cayambe the volcano of which it is said that it has the only spot on earth where both the latitude and the temperature may be zero. There is Cotopaxi who is even higher, but less elegant; and

Pinchincha which is not quite so high but seems more fiery. And there's Chimborazo there which is tallest of all."

"Yes, it is on one of them that he nests, Dana."

"But on which one, Valiente? Which of the four bulls is it?"

"There are only three bulls. It isn't Chimborazo which has no fire at all in it. It is the tallest, but it is a *buey* (steer) mountain, not a *toro* (bull) mountain. For this reason its high reaches are not grazed by the mountain heifers and cows, and it is for this reason that we leave it out of consideration here. It is one of the other three, Dana, one of the three bull mountains. We play little games up here when we fight and scheme; we call people and places by code names. The name of the mountain is simply The Condor's Nest."

It was mid-afternoon of the first day before they had the devil to pay. It was through a bit of foolishness on the part of Dana Coscuin and Damisa the Leopard that they had to pay him now, but he would have collected first payment quite soon in any case. There was a vault between facing cliffs there, and a path went around the northwest-most, and the left-most of them.

"It is a foot-way around there like a winding stairway, Lady Valiant Tyrant," Dana said. "You go up that steep stairway, Valiente. Damisa and myself have an inclination to climb up the face of this cliff here. We will meet you above *luego*."

"Englishers do not understand the shadings of *luego*," Valiente smiled. "Your wish could mean that we meet next in Heaven. I'd meet you sooner than that and not so far above. If you two must be fools, then be quick fools. Meet me above *pronto*."

Dana started up the face of the cliff, and Damisa followed him. Both were strong men of great stamina in arms and legs and trunk. Both had good and well-educated hands and feet for things of this sort, and both were old ardent partisans of cliff-climbing and spire-climbing. The height of this first section was more than a hundred and fifty feet and less than a hundred and ninety; it led to a sort of revetment with a set-back behind.

It was a cliff of knobby basalt, very hard, but uneven. It had been extruded by volcano (not really very long ago), then dipped for short thousands of years into the sea to acquire an incrustation of sandstone and limestone and shale, then raised again a mile or two (in even shorter thousands, even hundreds, of years), and weathered off largely to the same hard basalt. It could be climbed by a man with good hands and arms and educated feet, though it leaned inward no more than five degrees. It was a challenge to climb.

And Dana climbed it, not recklessly at all, but very carefully. He had looked high ahead with his very good eyes and judgement; he had scanned the whole height of it quickly and had set up a more than possible way. The bad spots of it were several, but they were not all that bad. And two of the three of them were below the critical height.

The critical height was that from which it was sure death to fall.

And Damisa the Leopard would climb anywhere this young white man would climb. He was taller and leaner than Dana, had a considerably greater span to him, had greater hands and more gripping feet. Damisa had taken off his sandals and hung them about his neck. He went up barefoot, but Dana went shod.

A spectacular cliff-climber, not the greatest of them but one of the most showy (he is dead now from a fall, and it is hoped that he does not fall forever, he was a vulgar and violent man), had described cliff-climbing somewhat coarsely as a form of sexual assault. It was excessively so for him, and it is so at least slightly to everyone who excels at it. But that isn't the main element for most.

The main element is simply man-challenge. This endeavor of Dana and Damisa wasn't exceedingly dangerous. Neither of them would court danger for the sake of danger. But it would be strenuous. It was a stimulating test of strength and agility which they knew they could win. It was the matching of strength which was required of them often if they were to remain men with an edge on them. And the rock was very hard. Hard and dependable rock is much better than soft and fissured rock. Its surface and configuration are its true surface and form.

Dana was quickly past the first and by far the worst of the bad spots. He'd never have tried it if it'd been at any great height. But a fall from it would merely have shaken him, not have injured him really. He was cat-like in his falls.

"You tricked it, Dana," Damisa called up to him. "You fainted one way and then went the other. Now it will be alert for me and will not be tricked again."

"You'll have no trouble," Dana called down. "You're a longer man than I am, and you can hump over it direct whether it is alert or not."

And so Damisa could and did.

Dana went past the second of the bad spots with surprising ease. This was just below the critical height. A fall from here would probably cripple him, cat-like though he was, but it would not likely kill him. Dana was a compact man with a certain close-coupled weight. The critical height for him was possibly lower

than that for Damisa who was longer and leaner than Dana, and of a spiderish build.

"Be careful the cliff does not trick you now, Dana," Damisa called up. "That was too easy. It lulls you. Now it presumes on you and might take you in your carelessness."

"I'll never be careless with this fellow," Dana growled down. "He has just made alliance with old enemies. I feel it in my nape and spine."

In truth they had both felt it since they had begun the climb, the gusty and frightening feel of old enemies at their back. But Dana was going upward rapidly, far above the critical height, and he looked as if he would assault the last of the rugged spots without pause. (This last rugged spot was no more than fifty or sixty feet below the safe revetment set-back.)

"Let us go back down, Dana!" Damisa called sharply and suddenly. "It's as easy down as up for this far of it, and the whole thing goes wrong all at once."

There was mountainous laughter from behind them, from the facing cliff across the vault, such laughter as turns the bone-marrow into soup. Only one creature laughs like that. And the echo of that laughter, only a little less mountainous, sounded with its own loud coarseness. At the same time there was the sliding click of shells going into the chambers of two rifles. (It was no more than sixty yards across the vault between the facing cliffs.)

"There's no going back, Leopard," Dana grumbled down to him. "Whatever they are, they have their code. If we start back down they'll kill us instantly, do you not know that? It's their way. If we continue up they will make a cruel game of it, but they'll abide by the rules of that game. We can yet win the game they play. It wouldn't be a game to them if we hadn't a chance of winning."

Dana was onto the third of the rugged spots of the climb. There was no reason why he could not climb it. He had appraised it correctly from below. He had even appraised that there would be unexpected menace at this point. He hadn't expected that the menace would be Ifreann and O'Boyle mordantly laughing from the cliff behind him and with rifles at ready, or had he?

Oh, this wasn't bad. The devil and at least one of his minions are always behind us, whatever we are doing in this life. It's a thing we live with. There was foot-hold here, and a little lean-in. There was hand-grip for the left hand, very high, a knob just a little too big for gripping by any but a very wide-spread and strong hand. But with that grip firm, or almost firm, one could swing the right leg up a long reach (four feet) and lurch to a better and higher grip

with the right hand. And the worst of it would be below one then.

Dana wished that the rock knob was a little less smooth, that it should be narrower by an inch, or his hand a little wider in its span. The tricky grip would have to take a good part of his weight on the swing up. But he made the grip, the back of his hand vein-bulged and black with the extension, the thumb standing out as sheer corded muscle.

Then a curious thing happened as Dana concentrated his sight and attention on his strained left hand. His thumb exploded. He watched this almost without comprehension, the thumb bursting into a mass of red gore with gray rock-powder sprinkled over it. After the sight of it, the pain and the first sound hit Dana at the same time. The first sound, that of the rifle shot, seemed to hit him in the back of the head; and its accompaniment, the booming thunder of devil laughter, hit him full in back and body.

Dana knew that Ifreann had shot, from sixty yards, exactly where he wanted to shoot, not a quarter of an inch off. Remember that; make a note of it and never forget it—Ifreann the Son of the Devil *can shoot*.

It was very perilous here. The thumb is a most tactile and sensitive instrument, well directed and well nerved, very well nerved. When even one joint of it is amputated it will scream out as do few joints of the body.

Dana could not make the grip with his mangled thumb. He hugged the cliff face, dizzy and sick. Damisa the Leopard came up as close as he could below him (there was no passing way here) and gripped him by the ankle. It was for comfort and steadying, not for real aid which Damisa was unable to give. And both of them were a little unnerved by the sound of the ejecting of a shell and the sliding in of another one in Ifreann's rifle.

"Can you come down, Dana?" Damisa asked.

"I cannot come down."

"Then we stay here."

It wasn't a good prospect, to hang there till they tired and fell. The erupting laughter of Ifreann and the explosive cackle of O'Boyle behind them helped them not at all. Dana was sick to nausea. He was afraid. There isn't any man anywhere who isn't afraid of killing height, not when the height itself quakes and goes dizzy and wrong. It will throw a man then; it will throw the best man.

Damisa whimpered, but more in frustration and anger than in fear.

"I'll have the life of one of you for this," he called back to the antagonists on the cliff behind him.

"Which?" Ifreann blasted the word like a mountain splitting.

"Which?" O'Boyle barked like the fierce mastiff he'd become.

"He'll have yours, O'Boyle," Dana called with surprising serenity. "And I'll have Ifreann's. That part was decreed from the beginning."

Damisa could have left Dana and climbed back down, but Ifreann and O'Boyle would have shot him off the cliff immediately if he'd attempted it. The rules of their game wouldn't allow a contestant to back out of that game. Damisa wouldn't have gone down in any case.

"God save us now," Dana said, "so I was taught to pray when I was young. Our only hope is from above, so also I was taught to say when I was a boy."

"Calm and steady, Dana," came the voice from above. "I make a loop and drop it."

"It sounds not quite like I'd imagined the voice of God to sound," Dana mumbled, but he was calmed and steadied by it. "I know that voice now," he said conversationally to himself and to Damisa, "and I suppose that it does have a touch of God in it. Angelene once told me that this man, dour and looney as he looks, had a bit of God in him, and Angelene could never lie without laughing."

The looped rope came down. Dana slipped his right foot into the loop without falling, hooked his right hand around the line, and was hauled up with some scrambling of his left foot and his blasted left hand. It wouldn't be long now, or else it would be forever.

It was the other rifle, that of O'Boyle, that spoke next. Two rifles, even if they are of identical make and model, will have recognizable different voices. And two men, even if for the moment of the same cast of mind, will place their shots with a little different sort of humor. Dana knew these two men. And it was the barking laughter of O'Boyle that was paramount as he took his turn.

He scotched the rope-line with the shot; scotched it, but did not sever it. He did it the second time, and the rope began to fray but did not break. O'Boyle wasn't missing, he was hitting! Dana was himself an astonishing shot, but he couldn't shoot like that. He knew with horrified admiration that O'Boyle was placing the shots exactly where he wanted to. Write it down (on the wind if nowhere else) and remember it for your very life—coarse O'Boyle *can really shoot!*

Dana knew that the third shot would sever the rope-line and that it would sever it at exactly the wrong-right moment. O'Boyle

stayed within the code of the game, but barely.

The third shot did sever the line. Dana lurched and slid, sickeningly and it seemed eternally, over space. He did not fall to his death, though the odds had been exactly even that he would. O'Boyle loved odds that were on the very knife-edge of eternity, and those were the odds he allowed now.

But Dana had been above the rugged place. Even the jar of the line parting did not quite jar him off the cliff. He scrambled and clung; with cat-reflexes and with all appendages he clung, even with his now foreshortened and screaming left thumb. Then he went up to the sheltering revetment, expecting one more shot, hearing it, but being unaccountable jerked aside from it. The strong hand of Otis Ranker, reaching down from above, gripped him by the forearm and pulled him over.

Ifreann and O'Boyle let them go. Ifreann did remove a low sliver from Damisa's ear with a most canny shot, and he scotched and creased that man lightly on the cheek. But that was all in fun. They'd continue the game at another time, Ifreann and O'Boyle would, and with a slightly different code for a different occasion.

About noontime of the next day, the lady Valiente and Dana and Damisa and Otis Ranker the dour United States man were in rock-ribbed Quito. And Quito is, in every meaning of the word, the most rock-ribbed city on earth.

Quito at that time was believed to be 9,100 feet above the sea. In the twentieth century it is given an altitude of 9,350 feet. We doubt that it has risen that much in the interval, though the thing isn't impossible. More likely there has come more accuracy in height-finding; at least there has come agreement on the greater height. It was the highest capital in the world, but it would have seemed much more like a mountain-top city if it hadn't been surrounded by peaks as much as ten thousand feet higher.

Nevertheless it was a very high and rock-ribbed town; rock-ribbed, but never rock solid. All the buildings were cracked by the earthquakes which rattled the town a dozen times a year. It was sunny and pleasant and bracing; it was cool; sometimes it was cold; and it was a rare day when it didn't rain at least once. But it always rained quickly and got it over with. The men were great-chested and the women were great-breasted, and both had the nobility of carriage which this gives. The city was always in the sight of snow in three directions, and on the other side one could always look down upon clouds.

"Five armies are advancing on Quito at the moment," a man told them.



"And the largest of them has less than three hundred men," the lady Valiente said.

"Oh, you spoil a good story," the man complained. "We like to feel ourselves besieged."

There had been gun fire in Independence Plaza only the day before. The main buildings were pock-marked with shot. (Some of the pock-marks were three hundred and sixteen years old since Benalcazar first came with his Spanish; some of the pockmarks were quite new.) It was the same with the earthquake cracks.

Quito was already a great stone town of the Indians when the Spanish came, this in contrast to Guayaquil which had been founded from nothing. And Quito had kept its older character; the iron-work and the balconies of the Spanish had, in many cases, been added to buildings that were already there, and already old.

The soul of the town was as hard as the rocks (and as cracked, so the people of Guayaquil used to say). It was embattled rock. It was conservative, or it was restorative. It was constantly rebuilding (both the town and the soul) but rebuilding the same things in the same way out of the same stones. Nobody could say which rock of it was old and which was new, but it was constantly renewed. It would have been better to rebuild it three thousand feet lower down, but it wouldn't have been Quito then.

It was a city of noble churches: El Sagrario, La Merced, Santa Ana, San Francisco (the city was still officially named San Francisco de Quito). But most of the Franciscans were gone now; the Dominicans were gone and the Augustinians (both being thought too Spanish to remain after Independence). German Jesuits had replaced the Spanish Jesuits in the old college and seminary. But it was still a very religious city; the Indians had always been more sincerely religious than the Spanish anyhow.

Quito had one great saint to remember, Maria Ana de Jesu de Paredes y Flores, also called the Lily of Quito. Guayaquil had no saint and had to admit that this was a difference and deficiency in herself. It was the only superiority that Guayaquil ever admitted to Quito.

If Ecuador was the brains of South America (all Ecuadorians of every persuasion claimed this) then those brains were schizophrenic, riven clear in two. The Quito half was a cracked rock, the rocks in the head of the land. But the town was gracious, it was beautiful, it was the high home of the restorative vision. The party passed through it all too quickly. Oh, they'd all be back again and again in the several years.

About noon-time of the next day (the third of their journey) the

lady Valiente and Dana and Damisa and Otis Ranker were very high in one of the bull mountains; they were in the Condor's nest itself, inside the volcano's rim, panting for air, sunburned and frosted at the same time.

Then Dana saw it and raised his arm towards it. And they all saw it.

One half of the sky was incredibly blue, sun-washed and golden-dipped blue such as can only be seen from rarefied heights: cerulean blue, angelic blue, pleasantly eye-burning blue, the light-suffused sky-blue of eternity.

The other half of the sky—but there wasn't any other half—there was nothing there. Not clouds? No, no, though there was a local cloud-name for this non-cloud. Not mist? No, not mist, not fog, not overcast, not light, not darkness, not limit, not extension either. There was nothing there at all. There was only half a sky over the world in this place.

"It's a common phenomenon here," a man was saying (the man was sitting back in a sort of rock cove under the volcano's rim), "and it's sometimes seen in other high places also. It isn't an illusion. The full sky, when it is seen here, is the illusion. Over all of the Latin Americas there is only half a sky. We are the disadvantaged people, the people only half-graced by God. It's always been."

"Och, you Indios have as much sky as anyone else," Dana said to him. "Expand your spirit a little and you will see it all."

"Man of one tongue, you have no place here," the Indian man said with a touch of anger. "You'd not even understand the language of condors. You Spanish have always had a full sky over your own heads, and very little you've done with it. I curse you."

The man probably did curse Dana, in Quecha perhaps, or in Quito or one of the other tongues. There was a mistake here, of course. Though many of the Spanish were fair, how could anyone mistake Dana for a Spanish man? And how could Dana mistake this man for an Indian?

Dana cursed the man in English, and he cocked one brow. Dana cursed him in Irish, and he cocked the other. Dana cursed him in Spanish, and the man discovered that Dana wasn't Spanish; he grinned to himself, remembering who Dana was now. Then Dana laughed.

"I know you," he said, "if I could only remember. You're not an Indio."

"Nobody knows me," the man said. "I am an Indio. Why do you come up here?"

"To meet the Condor, the hero-bird," Dana said.

"Have you no birds of your own?"

"The birds of my own land could not fly this high," Dana said. "They'd gasp for air and turn blue in their faces. They'd fall down. But I can go this high. I know you now. You are Gabriel Moreno. I know your cousin Milagroso, and I used to see you yourself in Paris."

"Gabriel Moreno is still in Paris," the man said. "He will not return to Ecuador till next year. I am the Condor."

"Is he?" Dana asked the lady Valiente.

"He is the Condor," Valiente said. "I told you that he was a bare-necked, wretched bird without enough feathers to cover himself. But we'll bring feathers to him. We'll fledge him and wing him. Really, he is the best and only prospect. We'll make a heroic bird of him yet."

"Your cousin Milagroso calls you the Christian Hercules; he barely laughs when he calls you it," Dana mocked. "And everybody brings feathers to this unmuscular Hercules. Is this how heroes are made, Gabriel?"

"How were you made into a hero, Dana?"

"Then you do know me. You know my name."

"In my Gabriel Moreno person I remember you, Dana. As the Condor, I look out with other eyes entirely. I don't know how heroes are made, and I study the subject. It is necessary that I know. It is required for my land that I become a hero. Some heroes are predicted and predilected and snatched up to heroism by the hair of their heads, as yourself by the Count Cyril Prasinos, as evil Ifreann by the Count Ouzel Rotwappen."

"I've not heard of the Count Ouzel," Dana protested. "Of what is he Count? Ifreann is Son of the Devil direct and has no need of intermediaries."

"Should the devil remember all his sons?" the Condor asked. "The Count Ouzel is elder half-brother of Ifreann and is his mentor. They have not met, just as the Count Cyril and yourself have not met. Count Ouzel is Count of extensive red meadows in hell and of a corresponding estate on earth which you have seen. Your own Count Cyril is Count of all green lands whatever, and his special estate is named Greenfields. So the private estates of the two Counts adjoin, on an island that is Earthly Paradise—with snakes. Count Ouzel is a high member of the Serpent Lodge."

"You are saying that those two estates on Basse-Terre—?"

"I am saying, Dana, that if ignorance is a requirement for being a hero I will become one with difficulty. Yourself and Ifreann have the quality naturally. I haven't it; but I don't believe it is required."

The non-illusion, the true-view of the sky, had modified now.

The clear line was gone. In the fine blue half there were multitudinous clouds going like white full-sail ships. There were darker clouds over the non-half, but Dana knew (all of them knew) that it was total nothingness behind. There was only half a sky here forever.

"We here are only half-graced by God for the reasons that we are Indian," the Condor said. "Cock not your eye at me, Dana. Even in my Moreno person I am one quarter Indian. As the Condor I am entirely so. God, being God, should be free from prejudice; yet I believe He does hold some slight prejudice against the Indians. He didn't give us an even start. We are three thousand years and more behind. We brag of some of our antiquities, our quite recent antiquities by any time scale, but they correspond with a very old Babylon and a very old Egypt, and on a much smaller scale. We missed everything after. We haven't been Judea or Israel. We haven't been Greece or Greater Greece. We haven't been the Hellenic ecumene. We haven't been Magi Persia or later Persia. We haven't been Rome. We haven't been Christendom. We haven't been the Low Middle Ages or the High Middle Ages. We haven't been the Crusades. We haven't been the Ocean Centuries. We haven't been the Renaissance. We haven't been the Science. We've been Spain but slightly, we've been the Church of Trent but slightly. We haven't been England; we haven't been France; we haven't been the salons or the academies or the clubs; we haven't been the philosophers or the inventors; we haven't even been the charlatans. We've missed thirty centuries. We are only half a people under half a sky. Is there any solution for us at all?

"The Anglos to the north had one solution. They simply killed off the Indians and left not one in fifty alive. The Spanish of the south (having parched souls, but at least souls) imbrued us lightly and then left us alone. But they left us alive. We didn't even come to Christ till everyone else had tired of Him and thrown Him away. We'll have to complete our sky at least. Dana, what do you build a sky from?"

They were with the Condor for three days. (Have you not noticed that the period of three days is frequent in para-history?)

It was warm and pleasantly sulphurous within the cone of the volcano. Emanations of banked fire rose and condensed, though a hundred feet away there were snow fields. The Condor, when he rose to his feet, was not so small a man as he had seemed. But he was still a Spanish-blood Parisian, and he had walked about amid the gun-fire of Paris making myopic notes with pencil in a notebook. Would he ever be able to take a larger look at anything?

A Hercules he was not, not yet. An Indio he was not, except in

his own word and in his own role as the Condor. Was he the best hope for schizophrenic Ecuador? Was he the best brain in this land that called itself the brain of South America?

"Who has been guarding this *papanatas*, this ninny?" Dana asked.

"Myself, loosely and from a distance for several days," Otis Ranker said. "I'll continue it. I have learned, as well as I could in the short time, all the trails that one might follow up here. He returned and became the Condor no more than a week ago. Yourselves have given the direction to his first determined destroyers, for you were followed; my intervention for you on the cliff was my first intervention."

"Oh, and who will intervene and misdirect this evening and tonight?" Dana asked.

"Yourself tonight, Dana," Otis said. "Damisa tomorrow night. Myself for ten years then if that is necessary."

"Any gold up here, Otis?"

"Just enough to justify my first role as prospector. Here are the high head-waters of the greatest gold streams and seams in the world. It's too high for it here, of course, but I've found my own mother-lode here. It's of a more royal metal than its reflecting substance."

So, two hours before dark, Dana went out on mission to intervene and misdirect. He went conspicuous. He had a bright way of going and a dark way, and now he went bright. It was as though he turned a light on within himself, or made himself all reflecting body for the late sun. His light hair was a torch, his green shirt was an eye-compelling shimmer. On the snow heights and rock heights he was down and over and up again. This particular bull mountain was really three peaks in one, three throats and mouths of one volcanic gullet. And Dana misdirected from the Condor's nest to another of them.

Blackbirds were gathering and settling over an area (how could common blackbirds be so high as this?), gathering for reason and homage (Dana hadn't realized before that Ifreann was of the Ouzel, the blackbird clan). Larger and blacker birds rising away from that same area in anger—ravens, or their South American cousins (Ifreann was *not* of the raven clan).

Bright against the high sky, Dana spoke with his rifle. The quick ears below him might as well accustom themselves to the sound of its voice. And Dana believed that he heard the black and purple thunder of a laughter—was that possible at more than two thousand yards? Then the rifles of Ifreann and O'Boyle entered into the conversation over too great a distance.

Dana projected himself down the slopes arrow-like toward them, still bright and eye-catching. He went too rapidly for that tricky descent to be able to imperil him, went like a burning arrow on a singing mile and a quarter shot. Remember that both Ifreann and O'Boyle can really shoot! Aye, but remember that Dana is Dana!

Almost within the dead range of them now, and he'd top the last crest like a green-white flame in the final sun. Ifreann and O'Boyle were hypnotized and mystified by the Dana madness. He seemed to be coming as bait, but all their senses told them that he came alone and that nobody had infiltrated aflank or behind them. They'd blast him then. He topped the crest, and they blasted.

But he'd dropped. For it was a split crest and deeply gashed. Dana landed soundlessly in brush-bush thirty feet below, the singing shots transfixing his after-image on the crest. And the after-image fell as had the image, dropping, gone. It's likely that Ifreann and O'Boyle believed they had felled Dana with their shots. And at that moment the light went out.

The crest had been the last place illuminated by the final sunlight. The tropic-mountain sun sets instantly when there is no mountain peak left to pick out. And Dana himself went dark, his own slouch hat on his head again now and an Indian derby atop that covering the white fire of his hair, a hasty poncho over his bright shirt and flushed body.

Look out! O'Boyle had been a night man, a poacher and deer-killer in Ireland. Ifreann had paranormal, though sometimes stupid, sensing. But Dana was a black arrow in this last part of his flight and he was through them and behind them in the quick dark. There really wasn't any twilight here.

Dana was into their camp a hundred yards behind them while they still held their breaths and their trigger fingers to listen for his death-twitches before them.

Ah, a little of gunpowder sprinkled here and there in the scanty camp; a little of thermite wick from small heap of supply to small heap; a little of black blasting powder that is heavier than gunpowder; a jug of rock oil for its explosive qualities, mixed with whale-oil for sustained burning. Och, and here was Ifreann's own little keg of gunpowder. 'twould do.

Ifreann hadn't an elaborate camp, but he carried a few fine things with him, fine food especially, and a small arsenal of weapons. That devil could shoulder a quarter of a ton when he traveled heavy, and he left it all in cache when he traveled light.

With flint and with candle stub (he always carried these things with him) Dana fired it all, camp and cache. It exploded

beautifully, and Dana's laugh exploded at the same time in high melody.

Ifreann and O'Boyle, of course, hit ground as if shot on finding that their dropped and likely dead prey was alive and behind them, working havoc in their own camp. They had been had, but they were still dangerous and devious. They came at once to the attack. They came like snakes on their bellies, real snakes of the blood and the line. O'Boyle could track, even on his belly in the dark, and Ifreann could sense a prey. Two great snakes writhed down the steps towards Dana in the dark, and the dark was their element.

But it was Dana's hour yet. He could crawl as dark a crawl as either of them. Why, he could crouch and climb lower than they could crawl. He went upward again in the dark, carefully, not shadowing the fire of the explosions. He slid between the two giant snakes, making a point of touching both of them. More, with his thumb bleeding again from Ifreann's shot of several days before, he marked a bloody D on Ifreann's forehead, and that giant creature believed it was only a low bush that had brushed him. What he signed on O'Boyle was a mark we cannot convey, but one Irishman will not use it in friendly heart on another. Dana had counted coup on the both of them, and they not even knowing it.

Two hundred yards above them again, this was quite quickly after the passage, Dana broke a loud ringing laughter that had his signature all over it. He heard the quick curse of O'Boyle below him, and the angry intake of Ifreann's breath. Indeed, Ifreann for the rest of the episode had located himself by his heavy breathing, he being such a big man, and crawling always such very hard work, and the great altitude taking toll. Dana pinned them down with rifle fire in their location and he left them pinned there. He even essayed a loud and ringing song:

"My name is Dana Coscuin, I am Proctor of these Hills."

He went back to his party, but not directly. It seemed as if he set his song to sauntering off in one direction and himself in another. By and by he came to his place in the Condor's nest. He lay down and slept the sleep of the justified in the sulphurous warmth a hundred feet from the snow fields.

Young men sometimes like to make these evening incursions.

"Ecuador is truly the back-brain of South America," the Condor was saying on the second day. "Greater Columbia is the face of it turned eastward. There isn't any neck. We are one of the monstrous figures dug out of our own ground, grotesque and deformed, neckless and squat.

"Peru is the lungs. Brazil is the great paunch. Banda Oriental is the privates. The Argentine is the loins and the entrails. Chile is the spine. There aren't any legs to us; we aren't going anywhere. We face east, into the past, where things have happened that we missed. All other continents face west, into the future, where things will happen."

The odd fact was that this man, Gabriel Moreno, who talked so distantly and bookish, who played the role of the Condor with not yet enough feathers to cover himself, this man really would become the savior of his country and the Christian Hercules. Not right away, not for several years, but after a while he would bring stability and inspiration and gain; he would bring a series of blessed decades, in fact. And he wouldn't have survived for it if Dana and his friends had not passed that way. Many things would never have come about if Dana had not passed over this way or that.

But in the meanwhile the blood must flow for several years. yet.

The second night it was Damisa the Leopard who went out to intervene and misdirect, and kill. We haven't the chronicle of his incursion, but he didn't return till near dawn. He said that he had killed O'Boyle. This may have been so. O'Boyle had been expecting a death since Dana had death-marked him on the forehead in blood the night before. And O'Boyle wasn't seen again.

Damisa said that he believed that Ifreann had now withdrawn down the slopes once more. He'd not linger when things had taken a wrong turn for him. He'd pull back and wait. He might return, but only when again backed by one or two or three men.

Men began to gather to the Condor on the third day, men who would be his partisans. He hardly knew what to do with them.

"Really, Dana," he asked, "how is it done? It is necessary that Gabriel become the Condor indeed, become a real hero, this for my country and not for myself. But how is it done?"

"Oh, it's all in the hands of God and of a mad God's-girl in Amsterdam," Dana offered him. "As to God, I have requests of my own to present there and to me they hold precedence over your own. But I'll ask the mad girl to do something for you. She really does make things up, and when she makes them they are made. I'll have her make you a hero. She can do this."

"I'll not be made a hero by humor, Dana."

"Yes, by my own humor in sending this, and by the creative humor of the mad girl you'll be made a hero. She can do this. Much of the world now functions by her humor."

Dana wrote a letter to Scheherazade Jokkebrok in Amsterdam.



He sealed it with candle-wax from his own candle and marked the seal with the bloody impress of his foreshortened thumb. After all, that mad comic had made it up that his thumb should be foreshortened. Dana gave the letter to one of the new men who were coming and going, one who was going down to Guayaquil with the news that the Condor had indeed arrived.

It would happen, after several years, after the letter had come to her and she had got around to doing it, that she would make a hero out of Gabriel Moreno. It would remain one of her fictions, of course; how could that bewildered man become the Christian Hercules in fact? But it would be a good enough fiction to go as fact into all the history books from then to now, it would be a good enough fiction to save Ecuador and purge her madness, it would be a good enough fiction to fool the man himself into believing that he was Condor and Hercules.

Late on the third day, Dana's party broke up. The United States man Otis Ranker remained with Gabriel the Condor in the Condor's nest. More than a dozen men had now accrued to the Condor; they would be his nucleus.

Damisa the Leopard, that mottled black man, took a temporary parting from Dana, to make contact with other groups in the mountains. Dana and the lady Valiente took a trail to Quito again, then downwards to the lowlands and eventually to Guayaquil.

A year turned over. Then a second.

Dana had been down to Guayaquil from the highlands six times. Each time that he came, he was fortunate to have rendezvous with a person who now spellbound him completely—his Ship and his Bride.

This was the ship named *La Catalina*, *The Catherine*. She had been at the dock in Guayaquil when Dana had first landed there from the Isthmus near two years ago. Dana had claimed to Milagroso Moreno that he would someday own that ship. He wouldn't. She would own him. She was a beauty, though, three masts and a funnel. Catherine had always been somewhat modern and adaptable. A funnel was in no way unfitting to her.

She always recognized Dana, that ship that was something beyond. She was always in port when he came down to the port city, though in between times she would sail to California and to the Isthmus and to Chile and clear around the Horn.

It was at the time of their first reunion; at Dana's second coming to Guayaquil, that Dana filed formal claim to her. This was not yet by deposited gold or by paper; it was by relic and bone. It was that small bone splinter that Dana always carried in his bosom, that

bone from the shattered skull of his murdered wife Catherine Dembinska. Now he left it in a secret place in the wardroom of *La Catalina*. Now the ship and the bride were officially aspects of the same person; the ghostly marriage of Dana to the presence was a legal one.

Dana took part in either fifteen or seventeen battles in the time he was in Ecuador, late in 1849, during all of 1850, early in the year 1851. The number of the battles, to the mind of Dana, depended on the count of the combatants; by Dana's own rule there must be at least twenty men involved to make a battle. Fewer men than this, and it was a skirmish. Dana had been in more than a hundred skirmishes. There were several combats where the count was uncertain; it was not sure whether they were battles or not. Usually the battles had from a hundred to two hundred and fifty men on a side, and of course Dana couldn't be in nearly all of them. They weren't big things, but this wasn't a big country.

Several times Dana was in the company of a boy-man Serafino Tirana, the son of the lady Valiente. This was a flaming young man of pure life and incandescent involvement in all good things. He couldn't shoot well, though; he couldn't use cover effectively; he had no real sense of direction or landscape; he was lost at night; he hadn't a real gift for silence or for stalking; he was still alive only because God sometimes preserves young fools and young saints for mysterious purpose. Serafino needed instruction in military matters; almost all of the young men needed such instruction. He'd have been wonderful at a proclamation with his pure voice, at some flag-raising on a barricade, at some flashy and heroic turning of events. Nobody's blood would have run redder or more sudden and striking at some great turning of events. What a martyr he would have made! But he wasn't, as yet, a very effective soldier.

At one battle Dana found himself on the same side with Ifreann Chortovitch the Son of the Devil. How could it be right that they be on the same side?

"Who is the bleeding joke on, Dana?" Ifreann called. "Is it possible that the Son of the Devil be compromised in his tenets? But your own interest, Dana, is in ending the wars with a certain kind of peace. My interest is in prolonging the wars with no peace ever. 'twas sure to happen that we'd sometime be on the same side, but it will not happen often. But, Dana, in one thing you have tricked me."

"I'll trick you for life and victory," Dana growled, "but in what one thing are you talking about?"

"Ah, you're in grace now, Dana. What will it profit me to kill you and then have your soul escape me? I am counting on your final companionship in hell. I'll make no secret of it; the folks there are mostly dull, and you're not. I'll line me up a score of ruddy companions for those latter days, and you are counted in their number. For you are Dana, and you will fall again and again. Ah, I'll catch and kill you at one of your falls."

"I've no need to worry about your own state, Ifreann. It does not change. I will kill you when it is time to kill you, and I'll not botch it again. Someone or something will tell me when it is time to kill you. The time isn't yet. How I wish it were!"

There was the continuing mystery about the child's coffin that Dana had left in charge of a landlady in Guayaquil. Dana had carried this box around a good part of the globe and he still had no idea what it was. He knew only that the contents of it were subject to independent change.

"I have made gold deposit in your name, Don Coscuin," the landlady said at one of Dana's earliest returnings to Guayaquil. "The gold in it had made it quite heavy; I was afraid it would break the floor. Now it becomes too heavy again; I must make another deposit for you."

"Or shall I stud up the floor for you?" Dana asked.

"No. I will go and make deposit. Or you do so."

So Dana had a good sum of gold deposit in Maritime Bank in Guayaquil.

Dana priced the ship *La Catalina* on perhaps his third return to Guayaquil. She wasn't cheap. He hadn't that much gold on deposit.

"You can have her today, Dana," the lady Valiente said. They met now and then. Several times they had traveled together. "It is no matter that you are short of gold. Have you not yet understood the parable of the slow money and the fast money? With gold and with paper, fast paper, you can have the *Catherine* today."

"Who would sign the paper? Who'd have the *Catherine* in chattel?"

"Why, you and I can sign the fast paper, Dana, and a few others. We'd form corporation, we'd print stock, we'd make money even on the turning over of the money. She'd be chattel to no one, she'd be the same commercial venture she already is. Everybody profits when the paper turns fast enough. You can have her this very night. You can try her sail this very night."

"Get thee behind me, Lady Diabhal," Dana laughed to her. "You are temptress in more ways than one."

No, Dana did not want the *Catherine* to be the commercial venture that she already was. What a way to speak of a ship and a bride. He wanted something entirely other.

"Ah, I'll unsail you of white and sail you of blue and green," Dana told the ship who now lolled almost lasciviously at kedge-anchor and had not yet been brought to dock. "One sail of sea-blue and sea-green, one sail of sky-blue, one of midnight green. Thou'lt be a ghost; and greens and blues, not blacks and whites, are the ghost colors. None will see thee for thy swiftness. In other life you loved to go over the high roofs; now you'll go over the high danger seas like a wraith. I'll give you shroud lines as black as Kerry cattle, and roving as green as gherkins. You'll be all but invisible as you go in sun or in storm, a ghost, a girl, a gull, a galleon. I'll feed you none but the blackest coal for your engine and your donkey-engine, and only the clearest wind for your sails and sheets. Three sheets in the wind, my girl, and the green-black smoke from your funnel when you'd strike the swifter.

"I'll mount nine brass cannon to roll out on thy wales: we'll volley, we'll shell, we'll raid. I love thy roll and thy rake and thy shape and thy tumblehome. You had always a form and a movement beyond the perfect."

Dana was in love with the ship. She wasn't a great large ship, but she was fast and handy. She was a ruddy beauty.

Months after this (it was Dana's sixth and last trip down to Guayaquil), a man passed him in the street. This man had the same eyes, but no other characteristic at all, of two other men who had conveyed instructions to him.

"Go to Valparaiso," the man said, and they passed with no pause and with no other recognition.

Dana went to Maritime bank and inquired of the state of his funds. He was startled at the new size of his account.

"This large addition, this very large and recent addition, who made this deposit to my name?" Dana asked an official there.

"The lady Valiente Tirana," the bank official told him. "She made the deposit this very morning."

"The lady Valiente is in the city?"

"She was; she may not be now; she was leaving at once, so I heard."

One other thing first: the *Catherine*, where was she? She was not in the harbor, she was not at dock. No, but she was on the horizon coming in. They'd have a timely meeting that day or that evening.

Dana found the lady Valiente in the house of one of her kinsmen. He embraced her with a sudden passion. He knew now

that she was a great beauty. He'd heard it said of her; he'd have known it anyway by now. They could but pass each other again and again in their comings and goings, and touch very seldom. Now they touched.

It wasn't quite what you'd imagine, not even considering the fallible nature of Dana and the quietly smouldering but genuinely volcanic nature of Valiente. For Dana was in love with his ship and his wife, and they had become the same person, or would become so immediately by the imminent ransoming. And Dana had now walked in grace for many weeks and was as chaste as Saint Aloysius himself. The lady Valiente was old enough to be Dana's mother, had she gone into the child-bearing business at fourteen. Besides, Valiente was a veritable saint herself, this on the word of everyone who knew her. Saints preserve them from all wrong in this! And who will preserve the saints? Did Theresa and John come together wrongly when they met in the flesh, and they likely the most passionate creatures on the earth? It is known that they did not.

Nevertheless, the lady Valiente, though a true beauty and a true saint, was a veritable she-bear of a saint and beauty. Dana had grappled with giants and prodigies; he had never met a rib-cracker like this lady. She drew him onto her bosom as if he were a child, and near crushed him there.

"The two sons of my body are always a little embarrassed by the demonstrative love of their mother," Valiente murmured with a voice like a ship talking in cross-currents. "I am glad that you, my new eldest son, are not."

"Where is your husband?" Dana asked after a while. He had not breath at all but the breath he drew from her bosom.

"In Asti," she said. It was the soft washing under-voice of a ship turning and tacking.

"In Asti of Piedmont half a world away?"

"Half a world away, Dana, where we come from, where my other son is now with his father, where I will go in one year and you in several." The roll and the rake and the shape of Valiente were very like those qualities of a fine and spacious ship. She'd taken Dana up in her arms as if he were no grown son but only a boy.

"And how will it be with Ecuador when I go, when we go?" Dana asked. Valiente's hair was loose and Dana was entirely within the cascade of it.

"Oh, the tide has turned here, Dana. You have felt it. No more than five hundred foreigners had infiltrated, organized as only the weird ones can organize, and had attempted to splinter her and bring her to red madness. And half that many others with scarce

any organization at all (are we organized, Dana, are we?) have started her on the way back to green sanity. The Condor isn't ready for several years yet, but things do go well. We come and go as we are appointed to it. A man in the street this very day told you where you were appointed to go. This cracked and green land is other than it would have been, it is better than it would have been if you had not come to its shores and hills."

"The *Catherine*," Dana said, "you have made deposit against her for me. Is it enough?"

"Oh yes, she's been priced anew." Valiente was really a small woman. How did she hold big Dana so easily and yet so crushingly in her arms? "There'll be a bill of sale already made out when she comes to port," Valiente said. "It's been arranged. And there's enough left over to equip and cannon her. Go at once to the chandlers and armorers. They'll be at the fitting of her even before she's properly docked. A crew will come to you, ready and able. Some of them you already know. Some you do not. One of them is very special to me. Three men of the old crew will remain on the *Catherine*. And a furtive but ungainly supercargo will sail with you also. You'll not want him, you'll not even see him for a good while of the voyage, but his sailing with you cannot be prevented. And part of myself goes with you when you go. You'll understand this later."

Dana parted from Valiente's bosom and from her frightening liveliness. He gave her such a kiss as is only given to the great and vital saints. He erupted out of that house and into the dazzling day to be about the ship and the soul business.

Dana drew bank draft; it was ready for him. He hired boat, and was out to meet the *Catherine* when she had scarcely entered the harbor. Her refitting began before she was docked.

And when she was easy at the dock, Dana put further workmen and equipment aboard her. A master ship-fitter, an Englishman named Osborne, came to him. There would be many such fortunate encounters. Osborne knew where nine brass cannon might be found, there in Guayaquil, already cast, and all but ready for mounting. He knew exactly what Dana wanted done, and he knew how to do it. They stowed and equipped.

At midnight they went out for trial voyage. How the *Catherine* spoke and moved! At dawn they docked once more.

Men came and went, and Dana was careful who they were. Nobody used the gang or the ropes without his knowing, and there were no lines to dock except coned rat-lines. The painters were at work on the *Catherine*, for she rode high in the water now, uncargoed and unladen. No need to careen or lock-dock her. She

had never been particular of such details, and they'd paint her as she rode.

Her hull was painted ghost-green, the color of invisibility. It would blend with the light or with the dark. But her new name (really the same as the old) was not meant to be invisible. It was painted large in her own ruddy colors, not red, not yellow, not quite orange, but all of them together in a blend that Dana chose. It was as near as he could remember the color of Catherine's own hair. But Catherine had had chameleon hair, not always of the same color. So would this painted name be; always a flame, but not always quite the same flame.

*La Catalina* had been painted over, but she was still there: for Catherine had also been *La Catalina*, the Kathleen, the cat-Helen, the Cath-Helen (the battle Helen), the kathar-Elen (the pure-Helen), the kathol-Elen (the entire, the catholic, the universal Helen); so she would always be. But now she was painted with her own flame-name by which she was known in both worlds: CATHERINE DEMBINSKA.

The loungers of Guayaquil cheered and hooted and laughed as the big bright letters of it came to their finish. They knew, as all good people everywhere know, that all Polish names are funny; and that some of them are holy.

Damisa the Leopard came to Dana that second day. He would go with Dana, he would sail with him to Valparaíso. Three other men came with assurance. They had received the call, they knew the destination (though Dana had not spoken that city's name since it was spoken to him in the street). And Dana received them, not knowing how they were called but knowing that they were good men.

In the evening, several of these men went off to the easy and gracious tarts of Guayaquil, but Dana still kept watch, knowing every workman and visitor who came aboard the *Catherine*. There was one who must not come, but he'd be too big to be missed in any scanning.

On the third day, the boy-man Serafino Tirana came to Dana with two companions. Serafino was the eldest son of the lady Valiente (not really, Dana was now her eldest son, and Serafino her next eldest) and it was by Serafino that part of Valiente would go with Dana, as she had said.

On that third day the *Catherine* was coaled and further provisioned, and on that day the brass cannons were mounted. There was much to be done yet. She would be sheeted at sea. Three of the old seamen of *La Catalina* remained with her. There

was Damisa, and the three men who had come with assurance. There was Serafino Tirana with his two companions. There was the English ship-fitter Osborne. There was Dana Coscuin himself; twelve men when the *Catherine* sailed at dark.

Ah, but there was a thirteenth man on her also, one of whom she had been afraid to her death. In spite of all careful watch of the gang and the ropes and the rat-lines, the biggest rat in the world had come aboard.



## VI

### CHILE AND SPINE AND THE GHOST

*Down coastal desert spine, through spumy white  
To green, below the mountains fired and iced,  
There came the quick encounter, where stood bright  
Bernardo's ghost, and sharp the thorn of Christ.*

—Auctore

Now to elucidate these lines (as John of the Cross always wrote of his own short stanzas when he expanded their elucidations into whole books), the spine and the thorn are counterpoint and pun, and they stand in apposition to the ghost. But the spine and the thorn are not quite the same thing. The spine and the thorn are both stiff, sharp-pointed processes, but the thorn has vascular tissue and the spine lacks it. The thorn of Christ (which does have vascular tissue) is both the difficulty and the hope of the world, and is of especial importance to the world with only half a sky over it.

But the spine has other meanings; one is that of determination, of back-bone or spirit. This meaning impinges on another definition of spine, that of the notochord of primitive creatures and of the embryos of higher creatures which then becomes the true boney spinal column.

In another sense the spine is the same as the spirit (the ghost). The bones of the spine (the cervical and thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, the sacrum, and the coccyx or tail) form the hollow sheath for the spinal cord of nerves and tissue; this cord, as well as the bones that sheathe it, is the spine. 'The spinal marrow, which is but the braine prolonged,' old Sir Thomas Browne wrote, but he was wrong. The spinal cord is not a prolongation of the brain. The cord was first; it was the main thing in primitive creatures. Then the brain appeared, as a prolongation or appendage of the cord, as a button or nodule on top of it. The cord is the older, its memory is the longer. It was the original location of the spirit, the ghost. It survives as a ghost, and as the seat of the deep unconscious which is of the whole long body and not only of the button which is the head.

But the long country of Chile is the spine and ghost of the South American continent. She is the relic of a more giant continent, much of which has been devoured by the sea. She remembers when it was greater; she is still the ghost of the superundated limbs. And the spine as thorn is ghost of an antediluvian passion akin to that of Christ.

There are other ghosts arriving to the congress of events. One is the ghost ship and ghost woman who is named the *Catherine*. One other is Dana Coscuin himself who had the appearance, to old men who remembered, of Bernardo O'Higgins; hence they called him the Ghost of Bernardo.

"Bernardo O'Higgins, the principal creator of the Chilean Nation, was short and pudgy, but energetic, with blue eyes and fair skin which betrayed his Irish ancestry," so wrote the great Hubert Herring.

That description sounds a little bit like Dana Coscuin. But the actual similarity was more than a little bit. Rheumy-eyed old men swore that it was actual identity. Those who knew O'Higgins only by visual tradition (and visual tradition is strong and very accurate with the illiterate and semi-literate), or knew him only from portraits, were equally convinced, on seeing Dana, that he was an absolute reincarnation of O'Higgins who had died as old man nine years before this time in his Peruvian exile.

Back now, from elucidation to narrative:

The gay ghost ship named the *Catherine* (her gaiety marred somewhat by a fearful presence aboard, however) was still a sail counter of the great Humbolt current, in valiant tacking battle with that current. Sometimes she near toppled under her sails, when the wind favored her for a while and the current opposed her, as always; sometimes she even went to coal and chugged her engine and spumed the water. But mostly she went on sail. She had been canvased now to her own sort of invisibility, sailed in green and blue. And she hadn't yet arrived to the Chile coast. She was still off the coast of Bolivia, off the Tocopillo sector.

There is a snicker. There is an ironic question from someone we cannot see: "Would that not be a little like the sea-coast of Bohemia where the Bard set a fanciful comedy, meaning by it 'Land of nowhere'? For these two countries have no seacoasts."

No, the seacoast of Bolivia was rougher and more arid than that of Bohemia, and not fanciful in quite the same sense. For Bolivia did have a seacoast in those decades; it was later robbed of her by Chile. It was a rough barren coast. And something violent and barren had infested the ship herself.

Dana had known for some while that Ifreann Chortovitch was on board. He thought at first that Ifreann was dead now (and was angry that he was not dead by the Dana-hand), and that he was present out of the flesh. But the evidence mounted every day that the Son of the Devil was there alive and fleshed and violent and scheming. The animality of the creature was overpowering; he had to be there. He pervaded everything. He made the turtle-soup taste like snake-soup, he made the Jew-bread taste like devil-bread. He turned all thoughts around the wrong way. He drew down lightning to the yard-arms, and caused sulphur to cover the sea. He was a malign influence. His booming laughter could be heard at all hours, but mostly in the middle of the night; and it simply could not be located.

The *Catherine* wasn't that big a ship. Nothing so large as Ifreann could logically hide on her. Dana was all over the beloved craft, by light and by dark, and he could not find this enemy. All the men of the crew were trustworthy, and none of them could find the foul giant.

Dana checked rations for three days to find if Ifreann was raiding them. He was. That creature had always been a glutton beyond all believing, and now he was using as much food and drink as all twelve of the proper men on the ship. Dana put guards on the rations at all times, and the guards were faithless and went to sleep. But the guards were *not* faithless; they were cast into sleep by malign power. Dana himself stood guard over the rations, and was ambushed into the same sleep or paralysis. Ifreann mocked him during these spells, and Dana could not wake to him.

Fires broke out all over the *Catherine*. Objects were levitated. There were sudden stenchs. Ifreann was having fun at his brimstone antics.

A man was killed. This was an antic that couldn't be tolerated. The murdered man was one of the three men who had come to Dana with assurance at Guayaquil. Dana put the *Catherine* to land at Tocopillo on the Bolivian coast.

The English ship-fitter named Osborne was put in charge. Twenty shore-men were hired; the ship was careened in a steep estuary there. It was unloaded completely. The twenty shore-men went over that not large ship for three days. They were looking for a great beast or man or creature, and they were to examine every timber and fitting of the ship till they found it. This creature was described to them. He had been described in an earlier chronicle:

"Ifreann was as tall as Tancredi, as bulky as Kemper (and oh, they were a huge pair!), and he had much more meaning and weight to him. Perhaps this Ifreann was a young man, as was said

of him, but there was nothing to correlate his appearance to. Perhaps he was handsome, if a man with a great purple pumpkin of a head can be called handsome. Well, yes, Ifreann was handsome; he was probably the most imposing man that any of them had ever encountered—but he did have a high complexion.” And again: “What does a tracked Devil smell like? It is undeniable that he has a strong animal smell when he is pursued or at bay—a little like a bear, a musk-mad bear. A little like a wolverine, which continental Europeans call the Glutton, which is also called the Son of the Devil. A little like an ape. Very strong and rampant.”

“We understand,” said one of the land-men. “It is the *espantajo*, the *coco*, the *trasgo*, the *espíritu errante*.”

“Aye, he is arrant spirit and arrant flesh,” Dana said angrily. “Find him. Find it.”

Dana thought that the fresh eyes of the shore-men might discover Ifreann. He was camouflaged from the ship-men, perhaps by their being too familiar with the ship and its background.

So we have three days on the Bolivian coast while they search. Bolivia was the poorest country of the continent, and this coastal region was the poorest part of Bolivia. But poor Bolivia was an essential part of this queerest of worlds. It couldn't have lived without her.

Back on one of the bull mountains of Ecuador, the Condor had told a mystical but true geography of the South American continent. He had named the countries and their parts with great accuracy and perception. Ecuador was the brain. Greater Columbia was the face. Peru was the lungs. Banda Oriental (Uruguay in modern name) was the privates. Argentine was the loins and entrails. Chile was the spine. And so it went.

The Condor forgot only one organ and member. He had a tendency to forget about this thing. He was still on the bull mountain trying to realize what was lacking in his scheme for things. He could not become the Hero, he could not become the Christian Hercules, till he realized what he had left out of all his theories. And he would be several years yet in realizing it.

What the Condor had so far left out of all his calculations was the heart. And poor Bolivia was the poor heart of the continent.

“For the balance and sanity of the world, it is necessary that there be ten happy paupers for every unhappy and arrogant rich man. However, for the balance and sanity of the arrogant rich, it would be well if all those happy paupers could be gathered together in some distant place out of our sight. They bother us.” So wrote an arrogant and unhappy rich man once.

Bolivia was a land of happy paupers, so Dana Coscuin decided when he had hired horses and ridden some way inland with Damisa the Leopard and Serafino Tirana. A long day's ride up country, and a long day's ride back, and talking with very many people on the night between—it did give some idea of the country. They did not see all the happy paupers of Bolivia, they did not see any of the arrogant rich; but they saw the paupers in all their sorts, for all sorts of poor people like to come down to the sea and idle there, and wander the roads, and lounge about the countryside. These are the estates of the poor.

Bolivia was the most Indian of all the South American countries, the poorest, the least turbulent; and on its own terms (which you would find meager and unacceptable) it was probably the happiest. There wasn't much oppression there. There was nobody to oppress these paupers. There wasn't enough wealth in any form to attract the wealthy or to create a wealthy class. (A few mines in limited areas, a very few plantations in others; mostly just the broken-up small and poor areas.) It wasn't really a plantation country and had never had slavery in a practical form—who there could have afforded to own slaves?

But there was subsistence for hard work, and not much possibility of surplus. The paupers were not of the ground-down sort. They were free and independent. They were just as lazy as they could afford to be; any lazier and they'd have starved to death, any more energetic and they would have lost their beautiful balance with the world. There are advantages in having a country too poor and fragmented to attract exploitation.

"You are an angel, are you not?" an Indian woman, walking along the road, asked Dana Coscuin who rode.

"No angel, me," he said. "I'm a bad man often. I'm a good man some of the time. I'm no angel at all."

"I know you are a bad man often," the woman said. "I can see sin marks on your face that shouldn't be on the face of one so young. I know you are a good man sometimes, that you are a good man right now. You have the air of one, and it cannot be faked. You even seem intelligent, though you are not even Indian. But you cannot understand a straight question or give me a straight answer. I ask you again, for I want to know this thing: are you not an angel, one who is sent?"

Dana thought about it a little as he walked his horse beside her. Yes, in every tongue with which Dana was acquainted, an angel meant one who was sent, on mission or message. I meant a delegate, one who was dispatched to accomplish a job, one who traveled under orders. There was an implication but not a

compulsion that the one who was sent should be a good person. There was the hope, so often unfulfilled, that all angels should ultimately be Angels of the Lord. But an angel was one who was sent, and Dana was sent.

"I am an angel," Dana said simply when he had thought it over. Damisa and Serafino hooted and laughed, and the poor Indian woman smiled happily.

"It is right that you laugh," she said. "I'll never trust an angel who comes sour. But angels you are with your laughing and your horses, three angels riding. There is a song in our Indian named Three Angels Riding, though my own husband says it is a mestizo song, half of our own tune and story, half of an old Jesuit instruction. I will sing it to you as we go along."

The Indian woman sang Three Angels Riding. The song was *cholo*, *mestizo*, mixed-blood and mixed tongue; some of the words were Spanish, some of them were Indian of the various tongues. The riders understood the words and the meaning pretty well, and Serafino Tirana wrote down a version of it that night when they were in an inn, sixty miles from the sea, where the land begins to rise steeply:

'Tis Three Angels riding to mountain and sea.

The Leaper, the Leper, the Man-Boy make three.

Come Three Angels riding with green words or red,

From God or the Devil, they haven't which said.

'tis Three Angels come with the word from great places,

Or come out of Hell for to trample the faces.

The sent ones, compelled by the message that's bound them,

To leave the lands changed from the way that they found them.

Ambassadors Three with instructions in sheaves,

'tis Three Angels riding with their hearts on their sleeves.

We've Englished this badly, but it's only one third our fault. As a matter of fact, Serafino Tirana Spanished it badly (his inept version is to be found in an old newsy letter to his mother), and Serafino stated that the Indian woman *Cholo*-ed it badly. She couldn't sing, and she thought that she could. That is often the way with happy paupers.

There were possibly one thousand foreign agents or angels meddling in Latin American matters at that time. Three quarters of them, surely, were angels of the Devil; and the other one quarter was split, confused, ambivalent, not understanding their instructions well, not understanding at all who had given the instructions. But the confused one quarter did have effect, and often it was timely while seeming merely clumsy. Sometimes it was lucky. Sometimes it was inspired.

The three angels slept in beds that night, as angels should, in

that country inn right where the land begins to rise steeply. These were the only real beds in the inn except that used by the landlord himself. But the Indian woman who had spoken with them and walked along with them brought straw into their room and lay down on it there, talking to them all night whether they were asleep or awake.

"You are worried about your ship, yellow-hair," she said, "and about the red angel who lives on it and cannot be discovered. I will tell you that the priest will be no help in getting rid of him. I will tell you that even the sign of the cross will not get rid of him. This red angel can himself make the sign of the cross, but he makes it with three fingers spread downward in the sign of the broken cross. But I will tell you how you can take this monster."

"Tell me," said Dana from his bed.

"Take a very large fat hog," the woman said. "Take it aboard your ship and down into the hold. Kill it there, undrawn and unblooded, and let it go to stench and rot there. The monster will come as glutton to this bait. Of course the stench will nearly drive the others off the ship, but there is no other way to bait the monster. Set there also half a barrel of the worst rum, the dregs of the dregs; put a quantity of mad bhang-hemp in it. He'll not be able to resist it. Watch and wait, and take him there in his gluttony. Run a knife into his belly then. There will come out blood and sulphur mixed. The monster will groan and weep then, but he also will do, he will continue to do, something too horrible to relate. You'll not be able to kill him with the knife in the belly, but you'll be able to take him and throw him overboard. He'll go still clinging to an awful thing. He'll not drown either, but you'll be rid of him for a while."

"I have a mind to try it," Dana said sleepily.

After a little while the Indian woman talked again.

"You angels, all you angels of every sort, come here to do one thing: to alter history before it happens, while it is happening, and even after it has happened (even this can be done). We will never have a way of knowing what our true history is. It is this altered history that will be in the world now to the very end of it. It may be that it is only altered history that has ever been. The real history is written in another book by another sort of angel. It's hidden away; it isn't much read even in its own world; it may be that it makes very spooky reading."

"You know very much, for a poor Indian woman," Serafino said, for Dana was asleep now. "How do you know so much?"

"Oh, I am a *sabia*, a wise-woman of the people, a brown witch. Why should I not be wise? It is my profession. All brains are not in

the heads of strangers or foreigners. The happy poor of this land are the wisest people on this earth, and I am the wisest of all of them."

And after another little while the Indian woman talked again.

"Leper, leper," she called, "are you asleep?"

"I am not a leper," Damisa said. "I am mottled from birth. And I'm not asleep. You'd not allow one to sleep."

"There is a mottled fish like you that comes out of the ocean," the *sabia* said. "It is a very large fish and quite fierce when forced into battle. We call it the leper-fish, and I call you after it. I know that you are not a leper. You are mottled between God and the Devil. You know that, don't you?"

"I know that," Damisa said. "And I can be quite fierce when forced into battle or when forced out of sleep. Be quiet, wise woman."

The next day the three angels rode back down to the coast, arriving there just at night. Dana went over the ship with lantern in the dark. The shore-men had not found any monster, but they had found all sorts of traces of a monster living in the ship.

In the morning, Dana got a priest and asked him to exorcise the vessel, "for you have good reputation as exorcist," he said, "and you are said to know the rites."

"Really, there are no rites of exorcism," the priest told him. "That is all legend. One priest is as much an exorcist as another, though long ago exorcist was the name of one of the minor offices. I will say prayers. I could, but I will not, put on a show about it. I'll not guarantee to rid you of your monster. Monsters among men are like the tares in the wheat. Generally we must suffer them till the last day."

The priest did say prayers in and around the ship. Some of them were genuine prayers. Some of them he made up himself, and in saying them he winked at Serafino Tirana who was a young nobleman and a latinist.

"One goes to Patrick first," Dana said with a smile. "And then, as precaution, one also goes to the Druids. Patrick may be asleep or his attention elsewhere."

Dana had procured a great fat hog. He took it aboard the *Catherine* and down into the hold. He killed it there and left it undrawn and unblooded to go to stench and rot. He went then to a tavern man to get the worst rum in town.

"Bad rum, rum that has gone too rampant for humans to drink, I give to the tanner," the tavern man said. "I sell only good rum to the people."

Dana went to the tanner. "Yes, I have a barrel of very bad, really



rotten, rum," he said. "I use it to soften leather in. I have been about to throw it out; it destroys the leather before even it softens it."

Dana loaded the barrel of rampant rum into the hold of the *Catherine*. Then he went to an East-Indian man of the town of Tocopillo nearby. From him he got a quantity of bhang-hemp or hashish-hemp. He put this into the rotten rum in the *Catherine's* hold. Then he ordered the ship to be righted, just as soon as the tide made that possible, and loaded again. Late at night they were asail from the Bolivian coast which soon would be Bolivian no more.

There was, of course, another ghost or ghost-form aboard the *Catherine*, a friendly ghost, a lucky ghost, but a very puzzling one for all that. This was the child's coffin that Dana had brought all the way from Amsterdam.

The men of the ship had come to Dana and wanted money. They were dicing and needed coin for it, and they had pay coming. Dana went to the little chest or coffin to see what he might find. He found Chilean coins there in fair quantity, gold *condors*, gold *doblonos*, gold *escudos*. By this he knew that he was past the Bolivian coast and off the Chilean coast. He paid the men sufficient to satisfy them.

We come to action now. Let us have some understanding of the situation, even the political situation, of these places.

The political situation of Bolivia was this: there was no political situation or awareness in Bolivia at all.

The political situation of Chile was this: bone-hard all the way, but of articulated vertebraed bone, flexible bone that had not left off being hard. The Conservatives were in power in Chile. They were really a middle-standing folk in the Chilean context, but they'd have been rated as conservative in most of the other lands. A back-bone must be at least a little bit conservative, whatever the other members may be.

Chile was a state of homogeneous people grown into a feudal pattern, and the main blood was Spanish. The Negroes and the Indians (except for a remnant of the fierce Araucanian Indians) had been absorbed. Thus Chile differed from other feudal states of America in that the laborers were of no darker color than the lords. There was suppression, but it was not the suppression of race. A Chilean race had been created from top to bottom, and the same bone-hard flexibility ran through every vertebra of it.

Back in the days of the Independence wars, Bernardo O'Higgins had been a genuine hero, in voice, in appearance, in bearing

(though he was a short man); moreover he was a military genius of great leadership and planning and of unequalled personal courage. These things would always be remembered of him.

As president of the country he had been a failure, for he followed an old Spanish system of tight central control that had always failed. He displeased all parties, the conservatives, the clericals, the liberals, while trying to please them all. He hadn't the sure sense of decision as president that he had as general. He was forced into Peruvian exile in 1823 and died in Peru in 1842, nine years before our present action. But time had been kind to him; his successes were now remembered and his failures were forgotten. In memory he was now a hero to all. His ghost would be welcomed back.

In truth, Chile was a very difficult country to govern centrally. It was a hundred miles wide and twenty-six times as long, with desert regions, forest regions, frigid regions, plagued by bad roads and rough sea-coast; it fell of necessity into a union of a string of local feudal states. This happened in the period of creative chaos that followed O'Higgins.

There was ineptitude on all sides during the chaotic period that followed O'Higgins, but it was all a bloodless business and a working out of form. The new liberal party was damaged almost fatally by the incompetent leadership of Freire and Pinto. The new conservative party suffered even more damage under the dictatorship of Diego Portales, a competent but unpopular man, one easy to caricaturize. But Portales did get the good constitution of 1833 which was to stand for nearly a hundred years. Prieto was president at that time; Portales was merely dictator or boss. After the assassination of Portales in 1837 (blood beginning to flow in Chile now as it was more and more spilt in all the progressive lands) Prieto remained on as president until 1841. It was discovered then, after he had been murdered, that Portales in fact had been very popular with the Chilean people themselves. His murder had been engineered by a small group that was mostly foreign. It might even be said that his murder was brought about by not more than three cartoonists of the new journals.

But by 1841 the period of creative chaos had ended and the good years had come. The disruption was of foreign base. It was decreed, by other groups in other lands, that revolution must be imported into Chile; that this back-bone of the continent must be broken. There was some jealousy here. If their own lands suffered from revolution, or were blessed by it, why should not Chile have such state also?

But a Chilean government had evolved that was workable. It

was strongly localized. It was conservative only in name, and in contrast to certain new movements from Europe. It brought well-being, it brought peace, it brought freedom, it brought closer equity of rich and poor than any other country of the continent, and it brought them without the slogans and hysteria of other lands. This was unforgivable of Chile. The only real attack on the good years came from the several new journals of French and Spanish and Venezuelan introduction.

Manuel Bulnes served as president for two five-year terms from 1841 to 1851. The good years continued. But it was in this decade that tares were sown in the wheat, from one viewpoint; or that the great enlightenment came to Chile, from another view. People began to talk of revolution, people from Venezuela and Peru and Banda Oriental, though there was a looseness and freedom in Chile that was not matched in their own countries. The revolution they talked of seemed to be a strong central government, a dictatorship, instead of the easy central government and the various local groupings. The revolutionary movement attacked the government for "Colonialism in Politics," though the colonial government in Chile had been a very centralized viceregal affair which had been unworkable. It was, however, what the new revolutionaries wished to reestablish under other name.

The tares were allowed to grow with the wheat until harvest time. Harvest time was election day of 1851. International revolutionaries had already gathered in naval force off the coast (Chile had virtually no navy). These international revolutionaries would come ashore immediately on the news of a popular victory and take over the real running of the country. And the local revolutionaries were absolutely sure of their victory.

The Chilean people themselves were confused. They didn't understand the revolutionary talk at all. They didn't trust what the revolutionaries said. If everything was to be overturned, that meant that they themselves would be overturned. The people had a strong sense of locality. They didn't see how all good things would come to them by being ruled by a bunch of foreigners gathering in Santiago.

Harvest day came. To the surprise of the revolutionaries, the people voted overwhelmingly for Manuel Montt, the handpicked successor of Bulnes and the government candidate.

Well, the only things the revolutionaries could do were to revolt and to call for foreign help. They hadn't a tenth of the Chilean people with them, but they had organization and centrality. They surrounded Santiago, the capital, cutting the country in two,

leaving a narrow thirteen hundred mile segment of the country to the north, and another of equal length to the south. And their international allies put Valparaiso, the sea-port of Santiago, under sea-siege with their gun boats. This could have become the bloodiest civil war ever on that continent, with half a dozen countries involved before it was finished, if it should ever be finished. There was every indication that this thing should come about. There was every indication that it would be very long and bloody.

And what could possibly prevent it?

Three words, perhaps, spoken in the street of Guayaquil many days before by one man passing another man. Could that possibly alter history in motion?

A middling young man who looked very like another man who had been young five decades before and who was now dead. Could this coincidence of appearance have effect?

Three angels riding a ship on the sea.

A leaper, a leper, a man-boy make three.

Could three angels, ignorant of their own mission, have effect on a thing like this? It was harvest time in Chile, and it looked very much as though the wheat would be torn up and bundled into bundles and burned in the fire; and as if the tares would be gathered into the barns.

On the *Catherine* there was a gagging coincidence of stench. Several of the men aboard, who at some time in their lives had made evil pact, understood a little bit what these stench meant.

There was the fat hog, of course, undrawn and unblooded and twelve days dead, that almost drove the crewmen off the ship with its stink. But there was something unnatural even in this.

And there was the monster (almost all of them now understood that this creature had left off being a man for a while), still hidden, but rampant and avid, who set all the men to roaring anger. Had Dana dared sail three miles nearer shore, all the men would have deserted and swum for it. It was harvest time on the *Catherine* also. It was Gadarene swine time.

And Dana Coscuin knew exactly when the hour of it arrived. He left the bait purposely unguarded for it when the time was ripe—an hour, two hours, how long till the most monstrous swine should be glutted. It had come on early night, and Dana, followed only by Damisa the Leopard and by Serafino Tirana, went down into the hold with a great ship's lantern.

Ifreann Chortovitch was there, or a thing that had been Ifreann. It did not appear human now, nor even acceptable animal. It sat,

or spread like livid ooze, on the deck-floor of the hold. It had burst and shredded its clothing with its growing bulk till it appeared in near-purple nakedness. It was hairy and obscene; even the hair of it was rank purple. And it was enormously swollen.

The creature was at the carcass of the dead and putrid hog, eating it hide and all, flesh and entrails and all, filth of entrails and filth of rot. It had already eaten an incredible amount of the dead animal, apparently *more than one hundred pounds of it*. The most gluttonous of humans could hardly have eaten a seventh of that. And the thing had the barrel of debased and be-bhanged rum canted over at an angle, and had clearly drunk more than ten gallons out of it, an impossibility.

This creature, whose human name had been Ifreann, was groaning and gnashing and sweating prodigiously, and it gobbled high hog without ceasing. The man's eyes of the creature reflected inner horror, but deeper eyes seemed to look out through the horror-holes with greed and hate and gluttony.

"It is as though an even more evil creature has eaten evil Ifreann," Damisa jabbered, "and left only his eyes looking out, and they turn into pig's eyes. And now it eats hog also to be in its paunch with Ifreann. Is it Ifreann at all now? *Kaka sunan ka?*" Damisa asked in his Hausa-African, one of the five tongues that all demons understand, "Who are you?"

"Ifreann," the creature answered in an almost human voice. So he was still Ifreann, in part at least.

"*Kaka sunan uban ka?*" Damisa asked him, "What is your father's name?"

"*Diabolos,*" the creature answered in another of the tongues that all demons understand. And it ate and ate of the rotten flesh.

"Go out from him!" Damisa ordered. "It is I, Damisa the Leopard, who commands this."

"*Damisu sai wutsi-wutsi su ke zua, ama kuraye kulun i na jin kakewal su da dere,*" the creature answered in the African (Ifreann as a man would hardly have known this tongue; as a demon he would have), "Leopards come here seldom, but I always hear the hyenas laughing in the night." Ifreann said this in a slurred way, half human and half animal. And he still gorged and guzzled.

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, help him!" Serafino prayed and made the sign of the cross.

Ifreann also made the sign of the cross, but upside down and backwards, touching first his gigantic paunch (his breast was buried somewhere beneath it), then his forehead, then his right shoulder, and afterwards his left (the Greeks still follow this sequence of shoulder touching). But the Ifreann-hand that made

the sign used the three fingers spread downward in the sign of the broken cross. And he continued to gorge on the meat that howled in the noses of them all.

"Och, I'll let it out if it will come out," Dana cried in a high voice. "My self, my *fein*, tells me to do this." He struck the knife into Ifreann's throat; there came out purple serum. He stuck the knife deeply into the bursting belly of Ifreann, and there came out dark red blood and yellow sulphur. The monster groaned then and rolled its eyes in agony; it wept globby yellow tears, and at the same time laughed like a hyena in the night. And it continued to do something else almost too horrible to relate: to eat and drink, to gorge and guzzle, while there came out of its belly the blood and sulphur mixed in great quantity. It had all the unreality of hell that the thing should continue to eat with such avidity while that putrid flood still burst and flowed out of him.

"Dante, still in his own *Purgatorio* by latest information, must be in envy of this hellish scene," Dana stated in wonder. "He conceived nothing more outrageous."

"I knew the Alighieri but slightly," Ifreann spoke in near human voice. "He hadn't much direct information. He was *naif*. He believed nearly all that we told him. We conned him a bit." And Ifreann still gobbled rotten meat, taking in even more of it than equaled the stream of blood and sulphur that poured out of him.

Osborne the English ship-fitter came down into the hold bearing a small hand-lantern. He was ashen of countenance by the jumping light but he did not seem surprised by the scene.

"Can the four of us take the mountain of him and heave him overboard?" Osborne asked.

"We can, we will," Dana said.

"Let me take a small joint, Dana," Ifreann begged, "to eat on my journey."

"Take it," Dana said, and Ifreann took a great rotten ham with fifty pounds of meat still on it. The four men carried the mountainous form with its burden up the ladder, then up the companionway to open deck.

"Can one feel compassion for a devil?" Osborne asked. "I'm confused on it."

"Not till he asks for it," Dana said. "He won't."

They flung the huge form and its burden overboard. It smashed and shattered the water with a whale-like splash. It left a glowing wake of phosphorus and sulphur.

"Is it murder we've done?" Serafino asked dully.

"No. He'll not drown," Dana pronounced. Then they saw Ifreann by his own yellow light, drawn up into himself like a big devilfish

and still eating ravenously underwater on the rotten ham-joint of swine.

Sharks streaked towards the creature, drawn by the turgid blood. And they ran into an invisible water-wall. They reversed themselves with a turmoil and spume. They sped away from that ocean-whorl in great panic. They'd come on one more ferocious than themselves.

Change after change in the Ifreann then. Oh, he was octopus, he was giant ray, and then more giant fish. He was devil, he was monster, he was man. It was as man, or as near-man, that he surfaced, apparently unhurt, turned and waved at the four men on deck (and did it with a certain resurgent pride), and swam for shore with a powerful stroke. But his way in the water was still a little fishy for true man.

"He'll not drown," Dana said in echo to the words of the wise woman, "but we'll be rid of him for a while."

It was no great distance. They were no more than a mile and a half from the docks of Valparaiso. They were in the middle of Valparaiso harbor now, and in the middle of ships. It was harvest time in the harbor also. Other things had been done, by Dana's previous orders, while the monster was being baited, taken, and disposed of.

It was light night in the harbor, and the sail-ships and the steam-ships stood up brightly and in array, gunboats all. And they had given ultimatum to the port city.

Then a ghost ship slid through the middle of them invisible with blue and green sails and shrouds and lines. She had come in swiftly on the night wind. Now she went on coal and steam almost silently as she coasted down an alley of ships.

History was being altered in the making, was being altered forever in fifteen minutes of impossible action. It wouldn't be remembered; not the incredible things that were really happening, not the bloody rapacious thing that perhaps had already happened and now was altered out of being ("to alter history before it happens, while it is happening, and even after it has happened—even this can be done," the wise woman had said).

All that would be remembered, all that is written now in the histories (where you can find any scanty thing at all of it there) is that there were rumors of a sea-siege of Valparaiso, and that nothing came of it; that the ships and the rumored ships vanished like fog or like bursted rumor itself.

All that would be remembered was that there had been talk of

long and violent revolution in Chile, and that it had proved to be little more than talk. The gathering of hostile groups had dissipated of themselves with only three very small engagements (or one by a variant account) within three months (within a single month by another story). It was a revolution in name only, 'tis written in one place; and even the name-only of it isn't given.

And yet there *were* memorable happenings one night in Valparaíso harbor, and there *were* memorable encounters with a whole city and whole nation on shore the next dawn or early morning. Memorable things these that happened, but are not remembered.

Dana and his men opened fire with eight of their nine brass cannon, four on a side, as they went on steam through the dark alley of ships. They shot point-blank, from less than fifty yards, at the ships on either side of them: two cannons on each side firing into the superstructures (what had Osborne the English ship-fitter and ammunition man done with these shells?) with weird scattershot of plasmic flame; two cannons on each side shooting solid heavy ball into the sitting ships right at waterline. Firing rapidly and moving rapidly, they demolished the double array of vessels; they left them sheeted in flame and floundering.

The *Catherine* was the ghost ship, invisible first in the dark night, invisible now in the trough of flames. She moved fast under engine and donkey engine and wind. She volleyed again and yet again, shattering superstructure and mast and yard, bursting the very bellies of the ships, and setting up sheets of flame and flame and still more flame.

Ships afire looked across the narrow harbor alley at other ships afire. All these polyethnic and polyglot gunships of the revolution had just been altered out of being. If they saw the ghost *Catherine* at all, they saw her at too close range, and in direct line of fire with their allied craft.

So the maritime revolution broke up, all hands on the craft turning to fire-fighting and pumping. Those that could move moved out of the harbor and down coast towards the rebel-held satellite port of Cartagena; many of the men would be saved by small boats out of there, but their ships would not be saved. Other men (the majority of the men on the ships) jumped into the harbor-sea and swam for the docks of Valparaíso, becoming confused and contrite foreigners and not revolutionaries at all during their exhausting swim. The sea-siege of Valparaíso was lifted. More, it was expunged. In history and in memory it became the case that it had not happened at all.

Ultimatum was never executed on Valparaíso. It was forgotten.



It hadn't been. Valparaiso wasn't shelled from the sea, except for a light warning lobbing of shot just after previous sundown and some hours before the arrival of the ghost.

And at following dawn only one ship came to dock, the small beautiful trim ghost ship named *Catherine Dembinska*. She had singed and flamed and burst thirty larger ships—and where were they now?

And one man only came first onto dock, before the lines were made fast, before the gang was laid. He came with a thirty-foot leap, downward and dockward; a heroic leap such as one does not see every day, or every decade. He stood as though made of golden sapphire fire that burns but does not consume. He was a tow-headed and green-blue-fire-eyed man of less than giant size, but he became a man-magnet in his own right. For the empty streets and dock-road slips were suddenly filled with people.

"It is the O'Higgins appeared again!" they cried. "He is returned to life and to youth. Chile is reborn with O'Higgins."

"My name is Dana Coscuin," Dana sang out to them.

"O'Higgins returned to life and to youth can call himself anything he wishes!" they howled, and they feted him and his crew now coming onto dock and they feted the ghost-ship *Catherine*.

Ah, they weren't really superstitious there. They knew it wasn't really the O'Higgins. But the legend cycle had made full turn, and this was another manifestation of that particular fire-and-ice hero.

Dana was a lucky one. He made his own legend, and he loved every minute of it, every day of it, the whole month of it; for it was a bright and celebrated month that they spent in Valparaiso the seaport and in Santiago the capital.

This was the beginning of optimism in Dana for the Green Revolution in the land under half a sky. There was much more than half a hope for it now. The devil had been bound for a thousand years (or for a fortnight at least) and he could not return as quite so rampant a devil as he had been; the bloom was off his youth in his local pervasive form.

It was, in fact, exactly a fortnight before Dana saw his peculiar devil again, and this devil was forced to the sidelines by Dana and his group, pushed out of notice (and he loved notice), denied his climax and shock-appearance (and those things were a main strength to him).

This was a large party-affair, a sumptuous feast and palaver in Santiago the capital. We will not say who was the host of this

affair or whether he was wealthy: he was wealthy in wisdom and esteem at least. We will not say that this was a high-society affair, as such things might be called in other places. It was an homogeneous-society Chilean affair of intelligent and benevolent souls of all stations.

An indication of the elevated spirit of the fiesta was the fact that the early lion of the feast was a leopard: Damisa the Leopard. This large glad grouping accepted Damisa, that mottled and leprous-appearing Negro who had been semi-slave, in a way that less high societies (those of New York or London or Berlin) would not have accepted him, not with such an easy grace. Damisa was barefoot, and who would notice that? He had bought new shoes that very day (his ship-shoes had gone to pieces), but the new shoes had not yet learned the ways of his feet so he had discarded them for the evening.

And this society did not make a mistake in accepting Damisa as lion. He was gracious, he was balanced, he was witty, he was worldly (of worlds many of the Chileans did not know about at all). He was a master entertainer (not a servile entertainer); he was a really rare talker. He was a much better conversationalist than Dana when they wound into the evening, before the wine that loosens and the brandy that warms. Dana would begin to excel later in the evening, as he always did, but now he had the good sense to look like the reborn O'Higgins, and to preserve the illusion with as few words as possible. It was all Damisa and his travelers' tales for that while, and Dana looked at his friend again and again. He had traveled with this man, perhaps he had come to love him, but he hadn't really seen him before, not with the wide-open eyes that all the people turned on him now.

And Osborne the Englishman was not, as it became clear, an ordinary Englishman. He was known to all the great ones there; he was known and recognized by all the little ones as well; his reputation in South American affairs went back ten years further than Dana's, and it had always been one of pacification and aid. He was another sent angel with a very broad mission.

Serafino Tirana was a nobleman born. This was not so important in Chile as it had been forty years before, but it was important to some. What was important to all was that Serafino was naturally noble. And the man-boy had become a man now; Dana hadn't been sure of it till this night; he had become a man in the short weeks that he had traveled with Dana. Serafino had kinsmen and kinswomen present; he'd have had them present at his coming in half the capital cities of the world.

Dana talked with a cobbler, with a weaver, with a fisher, with a

cattle-man, with a grain-grower. He found them all to be integral and important. This was a little like Ireland where all the common people are important, not like England where only the important people are important. It was a little bit like parts of Spain in this, like very great parts of France, like parts of Savoy, even like parts of bloody Sardinia.

Serafino had discovered a young and larkish female cousin. They had not met since childhood, and they were much taken with each other. She was not, Serafino explained it to Dana, a cousin within the forbidden degree.

"Nor is she in the forbidden degree to me," Dana said with a mystifying look.

"The *Catherine* would not like it if you took another wife," Serafino stammered out of sudden white-face.

"She'd love it," Dana grinned. "What if this Carolina should come onto the *Catherine* as bride two weeks hence?"

"As whose bride, Dana? Come away with me, Carolina."

"No, no, I must talk to this light-hair."

A rich man gave Dana a fine cigar, and he smoked it up with curling pleasure. Later in the evening, a poor woman gave Dana a cigar of her own rolling and licking (she shaped it deftly and rapidly) and he smoked it up with even greater pleasure. They all drank out of strange cups and ate from strange fingers, though none of them was really strange to any other one. They were a spontaneous group in close communion; it doesn't happen often with such a large group; it is a thing to be remembered.

Yet, there was one man there who remained a little strange, who didn't mingle easily with the others, though he looked as though he'd like to. This was a very large man and he had a familiar look about him. He had a booming voice when he used it, and a hearty manner. Why couldn't he come to the heart of the group?

Dana didn't really recognize him for some time, had not in fact really looked at him, had felt him only as a shadow on the fringes. The big man was in evening clothes of the European style. He'd have been at home in high society anywhere in the world. He wasn't properly at home in this mixed top-to-bottom society.

He was Ifreann Chortovitch, back in human form, urbane and distinguished, large; himself of nobility of old title. One almost expected him to take monocle from breast pocket and pop it into his eye. Then he did just that. The move was almost too much for Dana.

"Should one feel compassion for a devil?" the Englishman Osborne had once asked.

"Not till he asks for it, at least," Dana had answered. Ifreann

asked for it now, in his own way, by his lonesomeness. Dana went to him.

"How are you really, Ifreann, old enemy?" Dana asked.

"Not well, Dana, not well. I do not seem to enter into the festivities easily tonight. And I'm troubled with my stomach. I was wounded there, you know, and in my throat. I'm not healthy with it at all." Ifreann had lost his grand voice. He had no more than a strained wheeze now.

"Goats' milk is sometimes good for an ailing stomach," Dana offered helpfully, "and honey for the throat."

"Yes, so I have heard. I will try them. Dana, we are, of course, enemies forever. I will kill you in the final account of it, however often you kill me first. I'll drink your blood, I'll split your bones; but all that is in another context. We have reveled together and talked before. There was never so good a companion as yourself. Let us talk now."

"No. We've talked in Paris; we've talked in Skawina outside of Krakow; we've talked in my head, and in yours; in the flesh and out of the flesh. I've talked to you, and you man and devil and animal. I'll talk to you in none of these cases again."

"Ah, but you will, Dana," big Ifreann muttered. "In the weeks and months ahead you will talk to me, in the flesh and out of it, in my head and in yours. I can never get enough of talking with you."

"I have enough of it now," Dana said. "And you'll not over-awe me again. From now on, I enlarge and you diminish. No more, Ifreann."

"Shall I flee from your face and seek asylum in swine, Dana?" Ifreann asked. Ah, that was more like it. There'd been a flash of Ifreann's old purple humor there.

There was another strange man near, and Dana walked over to him. This man looked a little familiar in only one respect. He had the same eyes, but no other characteristics at all, of several other men who had conveyed instructions to Dana.

"Go to Montevideo," the man with the messenger-eyes said in the messenger-voice. Then he winked at Dana (he hadn't *quite* the same eyes as the other messengers had), "—by the long way round," he added.

"All right," Dana answered. "I go, in due time."

Due time was two more weeks by the little clock that worked in Dana's head. Then he'd set sail again on the breath-taking *Catherine Dembinska*.

## VII

### THE TESTAMENT AND THE HORN

*Madro cielo y dos mares y agua buena.  
Tierra altísima y baja; sol de soles.  
El hombre condor y sus arreboles  
El hombre azul y la noche serena.*

*Made half of sky, and the double ocean surrounding,  
Highest and lowest of land, and sun of suns of light:  
The condor man and the great red clouds abounding;  
The blue man calm in serenity of night.*

—Carlos Pellicer; *Toda, America Nuestra*

But this latter-day poet does not here say that the America is a land under only half a sky. He says that it is half sky, that it is permeated with sky. This is a more illuminated view of it in all ways. Physically and optically the America is suffused with light. It is much more hopeful than it was.

We ourselves do not quite understand the symbolism of *el hombre azul* (the blue man), and that is our loss. We think of him somehow as cool blue and night blue, as well as ghost blue. But we do understand something of the optimism, or optimizing, the turning the corner and coming back to the sun.

There now come bloody hopes to replace bloody despairs.

While in Santiago, Dana received a large packet of papers from Elaine Kingsberry the English lady who had been best friend of his late (but always in some way, present) wife Catherine Dembinska. It was a varied packet. There were pamphlets and booklets in several languages; people were trying to put the growing green revolution into words on paper. Elaine begged Dana to read these, to put himself current, to acquire an intellectual background to the movement, even though she knew he was no reader. There were notes from Elaine to Dana of various datings and subjects. She told him of a plot against her life and then a plot against her freedom that had taken place on a little steamship between Amsterdam and England; and of how it became necessary that she shoot a man dead and be harassed in courts for the act. Dana already knew this account in essential from Angelene Domdaniel of Basse-Terre; Angelene had learned it

both by letter and by her own intuitions.

Elaine also wrote details and reminiscences of Catherine; she seemed in some way to be wishing to take, or supplement, Catherine's place with Dana. And she enclosed the Testament of Kemper Gruenland.

How had she come by this testament? It is supposed that Kemper had given it to her in Amsterdam. With premonitions of his own death having grown to a certainty, Kemper had written out his Testament and Credo, trying to leave something of himself. He hadn't been able to communicate well in life.

It was fact, however, that Dana had already come onto stray sheets of this Testament of Kemper. He had found several of them in the child's coffin that was now on the *Catherine*, and later he had found several others in that same chest. Dana was forever coming on things in that chest that hadn't seemed to be there before.

There was a possible natural explanation of how the strong sheets of that screed had come into the little coffin. Kemper had been in Amsterdam when Dana had received the coffin. He had run his hands through the gold of it and tried to calculate its weight and volume. He could well have left written sheets there, and Dana could have well missed seeing them until later.

But Dana preferred an unnatural or preternatural explanation of it. He believed that some of the sheets were written by Kemper after he was dead and were wafted to the chest from Purgatory. And he believed that the number of the sheets in Elaine's packet had increased while the packet was en route.

"Ah well, I'll read them in my leisure at sea," Dana said. "It will not be easy. They are written, as were the other sheets, in the High Dutch of the Germanies. I talk it only a little, and read it less. There'll be difficulty and slowness about it unless the Holy Ghost kindle new tongues in my mind. His Ghostliness has done that for me before, however."

There were signs that Ifreann Chortovitch was recovering his powers. There was one day (when Dana had strode out a dozen miles from Santiago on the road to Valparaiso), a day that was absolutely perfection.

It was blue and green and gold, with hills and fields, and a torrent (all the rivers of Chile are short-running torrents from the mountains down to the sea). On the roads there were carriages and wagons full of people and produce. There was a real liveliness in it all. This was the healthiest climate in the world, the Chileans all told Dana, this rolling Santiago plain at the foot of the Andes.

"It is the scenery that strikes me," Dana had said once, "and I have seen scenery."

"What is scenery?" they had asked him. "This is Chile."

One moment of perfection there was, from the highest sky ever, from the most varied mountains, from the most burgeoning plain, off towards the bluest sea which could be seen fifty miles away; moving perfection of people and horses and wheels, the singing of people and the singing of the torrent.

Then it was all crumpled up and thrown away.

How?

Why, by a giant hand that crumpled it up as though it were no more than a sheet of paper, that proved it was no more than that. The hand was that of Ifreann. Dana would know that hand anywhere, by the rank sulphur-colored hair on the back of it, by the great purple veins standing out on it. But the hand was incredibly giantized so that it covered all earth and sky, so that it could crumple up earth and sky and throw them away.

Dana stood blind and deaf. He was not in black blindness, but in gray or colorless blindness. His eyes themselves were not faulted; there was simply nothing left to see anywhere.

The world was gone. The people were gone. The singing of the people and of the torrent was all quieted; there were neither people nor torrents left. And sound, when it came again, was inner sound. It was the mocking voice of Ifreann talking, so it seemed, from Dana's own stomach.

"Had you illusion of a world, Dana? Really, there isn't one, never was. And now you may not even have illusion of it. I've crumpled it up and discarded it. Had you illusion of Dana, Dana? Did you believe that there was really such a person, that there was any person? Watch (but you cannot watch), listen (but you cannot listen either), experience for a moment that I destroy this last illusion of yours. I crumple you up and throw you away, Dana."

"You are resilient, Ifreann," Dana said. "You have a little of your strength and cunning back. I was embarrassed for a while to have too weak an opponent. And now you feel yourself strong enough to play tricks on this trickster? Be careful, Ifreann, I'll open your belly again and let the blood and sulphur gush out, and your brains and your trickery are in your belly. I can crumple up illusions too."

"Dana, I have you blind and deaf. You cannot see anything at all."

"Ah but I can. I can bring it back. I can see mountains again, out of the corner of my eye; high in the east I can see them."

Ifreann angrily reached out his giantized hand and crumpled

the new mountains.

"You cannot see, Dana, and you cannot hear."

"But I can. I can hear my own blood. Destroy my hearing of that if you can. Crumple me up. Rather I crumple you. I destroy the illusion of Ifreann."

And he did destroy it. There was perfection again, and it endured all that afternoon and evening as Dana strolled back to Santiago.

But Ifreann did this thing another dozen times in the next several days, crumpled the world away before Dana's eyes and ears. Sometimes it would be an indoors world, and the great hand would come and destroy it and leave Dana in a sightless void. But he'd come back from it, he'd come back from it quickly, and he'd bring the people and the rooms back just as they were.

"Maestro Coscuin," a man spoke to him anxiously after one of these assaults. "You staggered and you clouded. Then you threw back your head and laughed. Is it well with you?"

"Aye, it's well with me. I fight with principalities. Whip them too."

And yet this Ifreann was deadly and dangerous. Dana had the good sense to be concerned and careful, as well as confident.

One other momentous thing happened in the Santiago days. Serafino Tirana, fearful that Dana would steal his sudden new-old love (Dana wouldn't have; it was all a joke between Dana and the lively Carolina for the stirring up of jealousy in Serafino), married his cousin (not of the forbidden degree) Carolina Olimpo in legal and churchly rite.

So it was that this Carolina did come onto the *Catherine* as bride, as the bride of young Serafino Tirana. This Carolina was a bit like Catherine Dembinska herself. And she was also a bit like a monkey. She was like the two things in one common trait: her love of climbing. And in another: her solemn gaiety.

How like a monkey? In face or in figure? Surely Serafino would have chosen a pretty girl, even a beautiful one. And she was; she was beautifully monkey-like, both in figure and face. She couldn't have been pretty, of course; that would be asking too much. Yes, she was a monkey-face, and she was beautiful, impudently beautiful, eerily beautiful, lively and lividly beautiful. Och, she had the muzzle on her, and the brown-black eyes too big for a human face! *Och is iontach*, she had the full teeth of which humans have only the remembrance! She had the crowded face of the monkey, so many things to put into it, so little room for them, but so beautifully done in her case. And she had the voice, of



greater range than the human and of greater rapidity, such voice as has not been heard in the world since speech was taken away from the monkeys for their sins. As to her own sins, she seemed to have none; none are known of her at all, none are reported of her by anyone; this is a thing in persons that you'll hardly encounter once in a lifetime.

And she was as inconsequential as a monkey. No, no, it is not meant that she was unimportant; that is only a derivative meaning. She didn't follow a sequence, a chain; she sure didn't put sequences together to any linear consequence. There was no one thread that could be followed through her anywhere. She was here and there always, in depths and in flight, painting her own picture in dots and splotches; but it all came to beautiful effect.

She was also a bit monkey-like in body, with the great agility and scamperishness of all monkeys. She had, however, an unaccountable physical strength that monkeys do not have. They fake it, they do not really have it. Carolina had it. And Catherine.

Catherine Dembinska had also had these monkey elements. Oh, she was a great and gracious and beautiful lady, but she had her own quota of monkey blood.

And the solemn gaiety. This is a monkey trick. Solemn, ceremonied, almost liturgical in every move, which does not preclude rapidity and darting of movement; a life-way of moving, an importance of the moving body; and gaiety of every minute of it: understand this please.

Such a love of climbing! Those who remember Catherine Dembinska in life will know that that flaming and dedicated and very intelligent lady was also a rooftop romper, a dancer on gablepeaks, a night-climber of edifices, a flesh-crawling daredevil. We must all be daredevils, though, or the devil will have his way with us.

The seamen on the *Catherine* were horrified (the most seaworthy of them were the most horrified) by the insane dancing of Carolina on yardarms (they were a-sea again on the roughest and most dangerous of voyages); they could not bear to look. They begged Dana to forbid the thing.

But Dana's heart ached with pleasure to see her at the antics; she was Catherine come to life again, smaller-bodied but just as willful. This Carolina could climb anything aloft. She'd go up the masts as a squirrel might, without rope at all. She'd dance on the highest yards and even on the billow of the sails. She'd drop from one yardarm to the lower in her own form of solemn insanity.

"The *Catherine* would not let me fall," Carolina would say. "She understands me."

"She understands you," Dana said, "but nobody understood her."

"I would have," Carolina maintained. "I do."

Carolina would tumble off shipboard, swim quickly under the vessel (and these were very rough waters they were in) and climb up the other side. Oh, she'd use rope if there was a rope dangling. If not, she'd actually climb up the slimy out-leaning sides. She'd actually do this. It was witnessed.

They were at sea again on the roughest and most dangerous sea-voyage of them all, right at mid-year, the winter of the southern hemisphere. The most dangerous sea voyage, the most dangerous voyage of *any* sort according to a seaman of an earlier time:

"The most dangerous adventure of any sort, short of death itself, remains the voyage around the Horn," he had written, "and it has the same two issues and options as the death adventure: salvation for the salty elect, or destruction forever."

But this was the nineteenth century; a journey around the Horn could not be as dangerous as it had once been. Not quite so dangerous for the larger ships, for these were larger than they had been in other centuries. But it was quite as dangerous as it had ever been for small-medium ships like the *Catherine Dembinska*. The winds still blew, the currents still swirled, the ice still iced. It was no longer true that one ship in three was lost forever in rounding the Horn. Now only one ship in nine was lost on the adventure.

Dana, by fits and starts, had been reading the Testament of Kemper Gruenland. He would read it all, he swore, but he would not read it all in the order in which it presented itself. In any case, it was clear that the sheets were not all in the order of their writing. Elaine Kingsberry had arranged them as well as she could, in the way she believed they should have been. But there were other sheets here of which Elaine knew nothing and had not seen.

Here was one passage of the Testament as Dana puzzled it out:

"Something momentous came into the world in the middle of the eighteenth century, certainly before 1790, probably before 1770, and apparently after 1740. I believe that it happened almost exactly one hundred years ago." (It isn't sure when Kemper wrote this but probably in 1848; it contains some insights he could hardly have had before that year, and he died on either the first or the second day of 1849.) "What happened in whatever year was that a new evil came into the world; or an old

evil, better organized, came into power. This evil has now ruled the world for one hundred years. It is the power behind all governments and the power behind all anti-governments. It is behind all movements of mankind, for no movement (not even our own green movement) has been able to stand totally clear of it. It has even infiltrated the Church.

"This is not something imaginary, it isn't something blown out of proportion, it isn't something that has always been. It is a difference in kind and not in degree from what has gone before. We are in a new era of evil areign.

"I believe that, just one hundred years ago, the millennium ended (the Thousand Years was the name of a mystic, and not an exact, period), and that the force that had been bound and limited for a while was unbound. I believe that the name of this new evil, or the old evil resurgent, is The Devil Unchained.

"We try, however, to find a more human and identifiable face for it. We track it through a jungle of organizations. We come up against walls and veils. We try to trace the pattern of these concealing obstructions. We say 'Here it is' and 'There.' And it is there, in every one of the places suspected, but we are not able to find the key place.

"There is a Hidden Hand indeed, but it slips inside one puppet and then another; and when it moves on they are puppets as lifeless as before. We try to externalize it, to give it a human or graspable form: but it is inhuman.

"It is no good to name it the Freemasons. It manipulates them sometimes, here and there. But then it moves on again and leaves them empty; and when they are empty, there is no group emptier ever." (Kemper wasn't a cadenced or alliterative writer; actually he had written *feige* for the first empty, *schwach* for the second, but he had written *ausleerer* for emptier. Dana had to improve and inspirit him in the reading, which often made it slow going.)

"It is no good to name it the Jews. The Jews, like the poor, we have always with us. They didn't suddenly appear with the reappearance of the thing. Of course there is a Synagogue of Satan among them, and has always been; but there are ninety-nine other Synagogues that are not of Satan.

"It is no good to name it the International Bankers. There is an astuteness beyond that of the bankers in all this. It is no good to name it the Illuminati or the Carbonari or the Rosy-Cross men. It is no good to name it the old Gnostics or the new Communists. These are things that the Beast has passed through, or they are footprints left by the Beast, but they aren't the Beast himself. The Devil Unchained has been in all of these groups. But also he has

been in ourselves. And when his hand slips inside us to handle us like puppets, what is the first gesture that he makes us make?

"He makes us point the finger. He makes us externalize. Dana and my friends in Dana, I will give you an example. I ask you this: was there ever an Ifreann?

"Is Ifreann our own projection? Does he in fact exist? There have been unreal circumstances to every one of his appearances. Have we merely externalized him as repository of our own Falsities and Violences? And why have we had such Falsities and Violences in ourselves?"

"Thou *amadan*, thou *Narr*, thou kraut-head, thou Kemper," Dana growled, "it's thy own nose that handles thee like a puppet and leads thee along. It was no projection that murdered my wife in Krakow, though likely you didn't know of that happening when you wrote this. It was no projection that gluttoned high swine in this same wife and ship the *Catherine*, and that gushed out blood and sulphur when I ran knife into its belly."

But the rapid and always gay voice of Carolina Olimpo interrupted now from the hold below Dana's cabin, and he realized that she was interrupting on the very subject he had been citing. He ran down immediately and into her torrent of words.

"But there was a great beast here, a great devil here, not one month ago," she was arguing, "and it ate rotten swine here, more than a hundred pounds of it in rabid gluttony."

"Carolina, Carolina," Serafino was chiding her. "Where have you such an imagination?"

"You are my own delight, girl," the Englishman Osborne was laughing. "Who but you could fabricate such fables? May you never lose the art. May you never grow up entirely."

"But it happened," Carolina still insisted in a rush of words. "A great devil gorged on high hog and rotten rum and hashish. Then Dana stabbed his belly with a knife and blood and sulphur gushed out. There, you can still see the marks of it! See!"

"See where? What, Carolina? What are you pointing at?"

"The stains of the blood and sulphur on the hold deck. One can still see them."

"There are no such stains there, Carolina," the Englishman Osborne insisted. "Only such dirt as is always on the deck of a hold."

"You have scrubbed them out then, but I still see them. Damisa Leopard, didn't it happen?"

"It was a thing too horrible for a young girl even to think about. Put it out of your mind, Carolina. For yourself, let it be that it did

not happen."

"Well, you sure helped things there, Damisa," Osborne objected with strong sarcasm. "Can't you see that the girl is upset with her imagining. It's no longer a joke. Tell her that nothing happened."

"I tell her—nothing," Damisa grumbled.

"Why do you lie, all of you?" Carolina chattered. "I feel it all. I will know it. Dana, here is Dana. Tell me, Dana, did you not run a knife into the belly of a devil here no more than a month ago, and did not blood and sulphur gush out in a great flood?"

"Yes I did, Carolina, and yes it did."

"Dana, you fool!" Osborne howled. "A game is gone too far. Were you the one who first told her this trash? She'll be hysterical from it in a bit. Now say that nothing happened."

"But it did happen. You three were here with me and the beast when it happened. And Carolina would no more become hysterical than would Catherine herself."

"Dana, are you crazy?" Serafino asked in unfeigned amazement.

"You are out of your wits, my friend," said Osborne the Englishman as he laid a hand on Dana's shoulder. "It has seemed since we began this Horn voyage, and even a little before, that you were ailing. You are believing a nightmare of your own?"

There was something very wrong here. Both Serafino and Osborne acted as if they believed that Dana was literally crazy, and Damisa the Leopard avoided his eyes; he groaned and cast his eyes down at the deck and would not look at Dana. Dana wasn't crazy. Serafino and Osborne couldn't both have become crazy at the same time, nor Damisa so distraught.

"Is this a conspiracy to make the captain believe he is insane?" Dana asked softly. "But I've never captained it over you. You are all with me willingly. If there was any hard thought you should have told it to me in words. I'll put any man who wishes it ashore at nearest port and at double pay. Or is it for the reputed gold on the *Catherine* that you'd undo me? Most of the time it is merely reputed, and I don't understand the reason for it. Tell me why you plot against my brains."

"Oh my poor friend!" Osborne moaned in real sympathy.

"Singly, Dana, singly," Carolina purred, "with my man as well as with the others. Have it out of them. My own wits and intuitions are on the line with this also."

"Thank you, Carolina," Dana smiled. "I'll have the separate truth out of the elders, and this younger also." And he took hold of Serafino Tirana by the nape and pushed him powerfully up the ladder. "Come along, beloved pup," he told him, "we will get to the bottom of this deep thing right now."

He brought Serafino to his cabin. "Now then," he told him, "let us have it. Are you all daft, or am I? If this is a joke, then a joke I don't mind. I know the crookie tongues of Ireland; I don't recognize them so well in the scattered nations. Do you not remember the monster Ifreann?"

"I have heard of the man Ifreann who dabbles in the politics, as both of us do also. I've not met him. He was pointed out to me once at a party in Santiago. I know nothing of a monster Ifreann."

"On this ship, you do not remember him?"

"On this ship I do not."

"Not of his being taken on the rotten bait and of your being horrified of his gluttony? Not of my piercing his great belly to let out the gush? Not of us throwing him overboard?"

"Dana, there were no such things. Not in my seeing or hearing."

Serafino was serious. He didn't remember them at all.

"You do not remember our first search for the monster, the malign influence, the stench, the lightning that he brought down to the yardarms? You do not remember the fear of the men and of yourself, and how we searched every cranny of the ship for the devil?"

"I do not."

"You do not remember the murder of the man, one of the three who had come to us with assurance at Guayaquil?"

"The man died of a fall."

"You do not remember our careening the ship near Tocopillo and our having her gone over for three days by land-men on the monster search?"

"The ship was careened for hull worms, to scrape her."

"You do not remember having the priest exorcise the ship."

"I remember your having a priest bless the ship. I liked that."

"You do not remember my procuring a great fat hog and putting him into the hold under our feet, and killing him and leaving him undrawn and unblooded for bait? You do not remember the barrel of rotten and be-bhanged rum that we set for added bait? You'll not remember the monster taking the bait at all, and our own handling of the situation?"

"Dana, these things simply did not happen. The *Catherine* is too small a ship for such things to have happened and me not know them."

There was never so honest a young man as Serafino. There was never so deep a puzzle.

Dana took the boy back to the hold and grasped Osborne the Englishman.

"You'll not take me by the nape, Dana," this Englishman told

him. "I'm a full man and I won't be so handled by anyone, not even by you."

"But you will come with me and we will talk."

"I go with you, my friend, and we will talk out this madness of yours to the very bottom of it."

And when they were in the cabin Dana asked Osborne:

"All right, you tell me just what you do remember about the monster."

"Dana, all I know of the 'monster' is the wild talk of yourself and Carolina in the present hour."

"Why did we careen the ship near Tocopillo? You were in charge of the operation."

"We did it at your insistence, Dana. You wanted to be sure the ship was sound in every plank for the voyage around the Horn. The operation was entirely unnecessary."

"We did not do it for monster search?"

"No, Dana, there was no mention of monsters."

"Or for hull worms?"

"There were no hull worms. The ship scarcely needed scraping. One always looks for them, but there had been no particular mention of them."

"Osborne, there had been a death on board, had there not? How did the man die?"

"He was mangled in the donkey engine, Dana."

"Do you believe me out of my mind, Osborne?"

"You are, temporarily I hope, distraught."

Dana dismissed Osborne and had other men sent into his cabin. First he had the three old seaman of *La Catalina* in separately. Two of them knew nothing at all about any monster, but they gave still other answers as the reason for the careening and the circumstances of the death on board. One man refused to answer anything at all. Finally he said that he believed he was infected by spirits, that the spirits had ordered him to forget certain things and that he had forgotten them. That his head was near to burst when Dana tried to make him remember again. He begged to be excused from it all.

Dana had in the two men who had first come to the ship with Serafino Tirana. These two were absolutely innocent of any knowledge of the monster at all. There was no remembering in them, and no sign of any forgetting.

Dana had in the two of the men who had come to the ship with assurance. They didn't remember anything of all this. They didn't even remember the dead man very well, though he had first come as their companion. They were no help at all, but they hadn't as

much assurance as they'd first had when they came to the ship.

When they had all gone, Damisa the Leopard came in without being called.

"And you, Damisa, you cast down your eyes and would not remember either," Dana chided.

"Me cast down my eyes, Dana? Never, without a reason. I had that devil nailed to the deck-floor of the hold with my eyes, and I kept him there till you finished the questioning. Otherwise he'd have been able to correlate the men on their texts and their excuses. Now he's gone for a while. I'm not likely to forget these things, but I wonder that you were able to withstand it. I'm experienced with the unnatural animals and you aren't."

"Am I not? What has happened, Damisa?"

"What you saw happen did happen, all the way. But the devils can always expunge the memory of themselves from simple minds."

"The Englishman Osborne isn't simple-minded."

"Yes he is, Dana. Tough-minded, but simple-minded; it's often the case with Englishmen. I was a wise man in Africa, Dana; too wise in one case. That is why I was cast out, after being a leader, and sold as a slave. I had encounter with the sleazy" (*furtivos*, Damisa said in Spanish) "spirits before I was born. I was mottled in the womb by them, but you'll never find a more stubborn man against them. I'm pleased that you remember the happenings. You aren't a simple-minded man, and I had thought you were."

"How did Carolina know about it all, Damisa? It all happened before she came aboard."

"Oh, the ship told her, Dana. They are very close. The ship is alive, as I believe you know. She is a person and a spirit surviving."

"The ship is my wife, Damisa."

"So every good sea-master says of his ship."

"This ship is my wife literally."

It grew colder as they blew and tacked south. They were off the Valdivia coast. Then they were off Chiloe and Guafo Islands. They came amidst the Archipelago of the Chonos, sometimes threading a way between the islands of it, sometimes standing westward of them all. They were below forty-five degrees latitude and in the brunt of the Roaring Forties, winds as rugged and sustaining as any on earth.

This was the hilled and forested Chile where the population had run sparse. They were not so far south even as Dana's own Bantry Bay was north, but the winds and the currents had more chill on them here. The Antarctic has far longer fingers than the Arctic.



They ran dead-ended into a bay pocketed with land and in sight of the great mountain named Valentine or Valentin. They had believed they were running between islands when they were dead-ended. When they were satisfied that there was no passage through, they landed for a day on a steep shore of the inlet.

The *Catherine* had been misbehaving besides. She ran far too high in the water, for she ran empty except for their own coal and provisions. Dana had disdained to carry a cargo, and had not taken on sufficient ballast to compensate. He may not have been the most foresightly ships-master in the world in this respect. But Catherine had always had her own humors anyhow. She liked to ride too high and too wild. She scared Dana sometimes, as she used to scare him with her daredevilry on rooftops.

They were on ocean, of course, but it seemed as though they were on one of those long lakes of the Andes that are high in the mountains. They watched whales, surprised that the creatures should be sporting in such high water.

While they were there (Dana was alone on ship, and the others all taking a chilly holiday on shore) Dana read a curious passage in the Testament of Kemper and wondered how that big young man with his massive crammed brain could withal be so childish:

"Hieronymos Oceanus wrote a curious history, that God had had an earlier incarnation, as a whale; by this he redeemed the Ocean and altered the whale from a malevolent to a benevolent creature. So may we pray to the redeemed whales for their intercession, he writes, as justly as we pray to the saints and angels for theirs. Hieronymos points out that the whales have become truly benevolent, and men have not: so that earlier incarnation may have been the most effective.

"Note also that Hieronymos does not write that Christ had an earlier incarnation, but that God had an earlier incarnation: he does not specify which person of God it was. It seems to me that it could not have been the Holy Ghost: He is more likely to have had incarnation on the high planets or in the high air. I believe that it is God the Father who had this incarnation.

"The iconography of Christ the person as fish may be a reflection of the older representation of God the Father as right whale. We feel profoundly that the peace of ocean is maintained by all the good whales; it would be a constant turmoil otherwise.

"But Hieronymos Oceanus strayed outside the Faith and only returned at the moment of his death. Are we to assume that it was such extravagant speculation as this that caused him to lose his faith? Or may we think that it was the intercession of holy whales that brought him back to it? That I may never lose mine I

pray for the intercession of all good creatures, saints and angels and stone patriarchs and whales."

"Thou bumblehead," Dana laughed, "I'd hand thee a penny catechism over the void if I could reach so far. But I'll pray for thee myself, green-stone patriarch that I am; aye, and I'll see about the prayers of the dolphins and the whales also. Who are we to refuse any help whatsoever?"

Dana had begun to consider himself as a patriarch, though he had as yet no offspring. He thought of Serafino as his offspring, and much more so he thought of Carolina.

"Had Catherine lived to have a daughter, she would now be very like Carolina," he said stoutly. "Very like, except that she would not yet be two years old. But there'd be a resemblance in the girls, I can tell that." But Dana wasn't really much of a patriarch.

There were troops of ostriches on the more open parklands of the shore, and troops of guanacos. The two creatures were very much alike in the high way they held their heads on their long necks, in the wooly feathers of the one and the feathery wool of the other. Both seemed anxious to whisper something into any passing ear, and both would take a piece of any ear that came too close to them. Perhaps the ostriches and guanacos of South American are but runts to their African cousins, the true ostriches and the camels; yet both stood near man-tall and showed signs of being formidable.

Then there came the feeling of threat, but not from the broken and rolling lands about. There was a hunter coasting the coasts, and he'd prey on Dana and his. This instinct of Dana was always correct; he was being hunted now and he knew it. 'Twould be no good to bawl out for quietness: this was a long-eyed hunter who cruised for them, and he'd not hear the little shore sounds of the party.

But the *Catherine Dembinska* remained the invisible ship in her cove and cranny, and an hour went by. Then Dana saw the hunting ship. She had taken the outside of the peninsula (that which Dana had believed to be an island when he came) and she would not enter the blind pocket. She cruised half a mile off shore, about three miles from where Dana watched her through a low saddle in the seaward hills.

She was larger then the *Catherine*, she was grander in every way; there was no doubt that she was better cannoned. She had three masts and a large funnel, not a small funnel such as the *Catherine* had. She had been built composite; she hadn't been altered for occasional steam. And the *Catherine* was afraid of her;

Dana could feel it in every plank of his spouse ship. Well, Catherine had been afraid of *him* to her very death, and she was right to have been. This was the old murderer acruise.

"He imitates me," Dana said, for the strange ship was not sailed in white. She also attempted to sail invisible, but for her it didn't come off. There was something just too striking in the darkling colors of the hunting ship, the glossy black, the royal purple, the trim of blood red which that ship-master would never be able to forego. Such pride cannot be hidden anywhere, however much it wishes to sail invisible.

Dana read the name on the ship. Dana could read a ship's name at three miles? Yes, Dana could read this ship's name at three miles, for it stood out in blood red on gloss black in letters twice the height of a man; and Dana had fine eyes. He read it but he did not recognize it. He took a scrap of paper from his hat and wrote the name down, and returned the paper to his hat. He would find it out later.

The name of the ship in tall red letters was *BRAMI PIEKIELNE*, and she was a murder ship. But Dana laughed aloud. Does not even the Devil realize that all Polish names and words are funny? How can one intimidate with them?

A gaunt, raling, and dust covered herald rushed to Dana as he sat there in curule chair on his balcony. The mad herald dashed his lantern to pieces on the rocks (rocks? what rocks?) and the broken fire and flaming oil of it ran along the ground like snakes. "They are upon us," the herald croaked, "all is lost." And then he died. Such an encounter was enough to waken one, for Dana had been sleeping.

It was no herald, it was Carolina Tirana y Olimpo. She hadn't died; she had cast herself down in happy exhaustion after running down hills and through water and climbing at a run the slick sides of the *Catherine Dembinska*. She hadn't dashed any lantern to pieces or spilled serpentine fire on any rocks. She had shattered, over the head of the sleeping Dana, a bundle of reeds and meadow stems and cat-tail rods and shrub fronds, covering him with a snowstorm of blooms and flaming leaves and late flowers, some of them of pleasant perfume, some of ignoble acidity.

Ah, the prone panting laughter and the flushed form of Carolina was pleasant to see. They weren't on rock balcony, they were on ship planks. Dana hadn't been sitting in a curule chair (what was he, an emperor, that he should sit in curule chair?); he had been sitting on a little three-legged stool and sorting the leaves of the

Testament of Kemper and watching a ship at sea. (Now the Testament had other leaves, and flowers, mixed in with it forever.) And he'd gone to sleep, for only a blink, and he'd received a message from a dying herald. No matter that the gaunt herald had turned a moment later into the panting and laughing Carolina. First, on the very advent of the moment, he had given his message, and Dana had received it.

"They are upon us. All is lost," Dana said aloud.

"Is all really lost, great-uncle Dana?" Carolina asked. "I don't think it is all lost at all."

"Go tell them to load stone ballast," Dana said.

"The Englishman Osborne has already told them. They're loading the ship's boats with stones now."

Dana took the scrap of paper out of his hat and passed it to Carolina.

"Can you read and interpret the name written there?" he asked her.

"I can't, Catherine can," Carolina said, still panting, and she held the paper with the writing down to the deck.

"Catherine says that the name of the ship"—Dana hadn't told Carolina that it was the name of a ship, and she couldn't have seen the ship—"is the same as the name of that estate that you know, *Porte d'Enfer*, which is to say The Gates of Hell."

"You understand Catherine very well. I had a fancy a while ago that she might have been your mother, in a strange sense."

"Oh, she was distant cousin of my own mother, and they looked alike, beautiful, not ugly and monkey-faced like me."

"You knew her, Catherine, in the flesh I mean?"

"I met her once in London, when I was a little girl and she a big girl. She recalled that meeting to me only yesterday."

Well, that was all right. Most of the noble folk of the world are at least distantly cousins, and both Catherine and Carolina belonged to the noble folk. Carolina was gone off the ship then and to the ship's boats where the men were loading stones.

A black bird, a big black raven-like bird came and held conversation with Dana. They couldn't understand each others tongues. The bird talked in bird tongue and didn't intend to be understood, only to be friendly.

It wasn't the same raven that had talked with Dana and warned him near Skawina; it wasn't even the same species of raven. It wasn't the same one that had cawed at him in recognition on Basse-Terre. The situation was a little like that of the several men who had given Dana instruction and destination: they had been different men with the same eyes. These had all been different

birds, but there was some similarity in all of them, and they were all partisans of Dana.

"The black-birds have declared for Hell long ago," Dana said, "but the ravens are for us." He told the bird to ascend and spy whether the strange ship was still visible. The bird didn't understand him. It walked about the decks, and it flew up to explore the upper rigging. It did not report back, not in that particular bird person ever.

The men, under the direction of the Englishman Osborne, brought and loaded twelve boatloads of stones with the two ship's boats. It would settle the high-riding *Catherine* somewhat.

"We must at every moment be in expectation of the moment of the parousia." This was the Testament of Kemper being read imperfectly by the eyes of Dana Coscuin. "Now, the parousia meant originally no more than the presence. Then it meant the special presence that must be in us. It is the in-dwelling (*einwohnung*), it is the resolution, it is the coming, or it is the second coming; it is the day of judgement, it is the end of the world; it is tomorrow, it is today yet if we hurry. And we must hurry if we are to be ready for it, and we *must* be ready for it.

"We must institute, detail, and support, *today*, all the economic, social, political, bionomical, psychic, musikotic (things of the muses, the arts and the sciences, the musics), teleologic, agapetic" —there were some other classifications here that Dana could not understand, that perhaps Kemper had not understood —"principles, the principles of all these things in accordance with the parousia. We must believe that the parousia, if it does not arrive today, will arrive tomorrow at the very latest, and we must be in a fevered hurry for it. If each day we discover that in fact the parousia has not arrived, we must still say 'It will arrive tomorrow then. Hurry, hurry, make ready for it.' We are not permitted delay in things pertaining to the parousia, and everything pertains to the parousia."

Carolina had brought a guanaco onto ship and she announced that she intended to keep it. It was a fine noble male beast. Men helped her bring and load several ship's boats full of meadow-hay, the cold-killed high grass that made a natural hay which the animals lived on through all the southern winter on that coast.

They waited till it was total dark, and then cast off from that shore. Dana had night eyes, and so had Damisa the Leopard. They navigated out from the dead-end pocket; they came to clear and unobstructed sea again and followed south. Men with true night eyes could see the shapes and patterns of everything. They could see the shallows and the depths, the land and the further land.

They could see the sharks, and the larger shark.

The larger shark had a huge scanning light. It was a great parabolic silvered mirror with burning buckets of oil and iron baskets of flaming wood knots at the focus of it. It threw a fine search-light out over the water; it scanned and scanned. This larger shark had sails that were gloss-black and royal purple, and it was trimmed everywhere in blood red. It was named *BRAMI PIEKIELNE* (Dana called it the Bramble Pickle now and he laughed at it) which is The Gates of Hell.

The *Catherine Dembinska* slid by that large and cannoned shark-ship in the dark, and the flaming scanning light never came onto her once. (It wasn't really a very good searchlight; it blinded more than it showed.)

South to ice-winter then, for a few more days. There was exhilarating tempest and gale. The *Catherine* became almost a crystal ship incrustated with ice. Inside of Wellington Island she went, inside of Madre de Dios (Mother of God) Island, inside of Hanover Island, and then loafing in still more interior channels while the big shark-ship, the Bramble Pickle, passed them on the outside, still searching. And everyone knew that Ifreann Chortovitch was ship-master of the cryptic and scarlet-piped Pickle.

"I was fortunate in everything," the Testament of Kemper said (this sheet was possibly the first of all the Testament, though it was found in the disordered middle of one bundle), "I was born into the Faith itself, as well as into the Folk in whom the tide was rising. I was born into kind and intelligent and wealthy family. I came with a good mind, a great body, and towering expectations in myself. Why then will I die upside down in a small water with my life unaccomplished and even my youth unrealized?

"It is because I was also born a quester. The quest was given me to follow out, even if it should take me to the edge of the world. Oh, but by a queer mishap I slip off that world's edge. I fall and I am gone.

"I was born for the adventure, for the green gamble; I gambled it to the absolute extent of my powers. I was one of the special people, of the mythological people, and Dana believed me a giant returned at our first encounter. But I lose my gamble and my life. I foresee this all now in the last month of that life. Why do I lose it?

"Because not everyone can win the gamble or there would be no gamble to it. The stakes could not go so high without high risk. And they were very high, and they go even higher. I am destroyed for this world, but should someone not be able to take something

from me? Let my own talents and members be scattered and given to the others in some way. I should still be of some use to the transcendent green and growing thing. Let me be green manure for it at least.

"I am now like a great bag of words full to bursting, in prediction and prescience of my own death and total failure I am exploding with these unspoken words. I am into the white fires of purgatory before my actual death; I am swollen and inarticulate with my own frustration. I'm a lopped off limb of this green growing thing, and I'll still believe in it as the true image of the Thing itself till I reach (after a thousand years in these white flames) Green Heaven of the Blessed, of which I have already seen a fragment.

"I pour out floods of words and I spoil quires of paper, but there are obstacles, obstacles, obstacles."

One of the obstacles was that Dana was able to translate no more than one sentence in five; that's one reason that the extracts here appear in such scrimped form. But perhaps Kemper was improved by being quintimated; he had always been a wordy young fellow.

Dana read the Testament fragments with some interest but without emotion. He had loved Kemper, he supposed, in a cold sort of way; but Kemper simply hadn't been a man to ignite emotion. It was for that, it may be, that he would have to spend such a term in the white fires; he'd learn the igniting there.

And yet Kemper had been a young man of very great passion and promise, and of outsized body and egotism, and he'd been terminated before his late-blooming youth had really opened. Some of Kemper's talents and members did enter into Dana in those days and weeks. He was there, almost as immediately, but not nearly as warmly, as Catherine herself. There was much of Kemper's tall and awkward spirit in the coronal lightning that danced so solemnly about the icy yardarms of the *Catherine*; there was something of his shattered and bulky resoluteness in the ice-pinnacled passages and cruising icebergs.

"Through the dark cheerfully," was on another page of the Testament; it was almost the only phrase that Dana could read on that page. It was really a motto for Kemper. He'd been painfully cheerful, but he hadn't ignited.

"Green manure, are you, Kemper?" Dana asked jovially as he set the Testament aside once more for a while. "Sack up yourself properly then, and set you over in the corner by the guanaco. We'll plow you in under the growing roots when we are next ashore."

Kemper was dead. Catherine was dead. Perhaps others were. There had been no word for the several years from Tancredi and Mariella Cima. There had been no word lately from Charley Ocean. It might be that Dana was the only one of the Company left alive. Oh well, one forms green companies again and again. The green companies own no sovereign against death and destruction.

"Somewhere near here, down under the water and the bergs, there is a little factory, a smithy, an *usine*, where the great Humbolt Current is manufactured and hammered together," the Englishman Osborne said.

"I imagined that the thing was devised still further south, in a shop under Antarctica itself," Dana smiled.

"No. It isn't that way. It's made in a little inundated shop not too far offshore from last land. On further south, before coming to the permanent ice, there is cross water and even calm water. The great current wells up from under very close to here."

They were off the Archipelago Reina Adelaida, almost off of icy last land. The shark-ship still hunted them and lay in trap for them, and they must soon decide whether it would be the Magallanes Strait, the Beagle Passage, the Wollaston Pass, or the outer Horn-around itself. It didn't matter much, except that their correct guessing was a matter of life or death.

Meanwhile, the guanaco had become mean and savage, though all it had was its awkward teeth to be savage with. A guanaco cannot kick damagingly. It dances and scutters about, but it cannot really kick. And its jaws and muzzle may be clamped shut by a man's hand and its neck twisted whenever it becomes too mean. Nevertheless, the guanaco had become annoyed and annoying.

The animal was jealous of Serafino Tirana and his affection for his wife Carolina. It was jealous of Dana because he was ship-master. It was jealous of Damisa because Damisa was smarter than itself. The only one bothered by the animal's behavior was Serafino who had not yet completed his honeymoon, his honeymoon, with his wife.

The animal would give them no peace together. It harassed them in the open, and it camel-howled, goat-gaggled, sheep-bleated, stomped and chewed at every door they were behind, at every bulkhead that separated it off. Serafino bound the animal's jaws together when he was tired of its biting. He hobbled the legs of it, and twisted its neck till it cried like a kid. But the guanaco remained angry and excited and jealous. There had never been so love-sick an animal anywhere. It was totally taken by the



beautiful monkey-face, the Carolina.

And there was a lot of sympathy for the animal on board. The men knew just how he felt. The guanaco wasn't the only one who felt a double love for Carolina (licit and illicit at once), and suffered a two-level jealousy of Serafino (good-humored and joking, and at the same time gnawing and a little tainted). All the men felt it, even Dana. The sad and awkward guanaco was the symbol of them all.

They took the outside way on the sea, outside and south of Desolation Island, but inside some of its satellite islands. They had lost the shark-ship, but whether ahead of them or behind them they did not now know. The monster-master of that Gates of Hell didn't know where the *Catherine* was now. The danger was that the men on the *Catherine* didn't know where he was either. The days were long white twilights with snow on the lands and even over the fringing seas. Visibility was very poor; one could hardly tell the islands from the bergs.

Inside of Londonderry Island they went then, but outside of Hoste, then south of the land mass and going east. The Wollastons loomed ahead of them one sleety noon, and no order was given which way to take. Dana had his nose in strange papers and seemed to have absolved himself of command in this. It was Catherine herself who decided.

Damisa the Leopard had the wheel in hand, and there was never a man with such power in his hands as Damisa. But the *Catherine* turned the wheel on him, to starboard, southeast and south. It isn't true that she wrenched the wheel from his hands and turned it. She gave but gentle and firm indication of the direction, and Damisa understood and did. Further south again, and around the very last rock of the island group. The *Catherine* wished to go absolutely around the Horn, and she did. Cape Horn is a minor and unimpressive sight, but the southernmost of them all.

The wind was behind them, a gale that was really more voice than blow. That gale had scared more ships to death than she had actually shattered. It was sleeting and lightning at the same time in a queer and noisy storm. Dana sat on a three-legged stool on the bucking rolling deck and was once more (with the howl and the scurry about him) devouring the Testament of Kemper Gruenland.

Dana read or imbibed it by the glittering lightning that made dazzle of the driving sleet. The hours had roared by; it had come on night now, if there was any way to tell day from night.

"On steam!" Dana ordered suddenly, though there had been no

change of situation. The boilers were fired, as Dana returned to his perusing. He would drink, as it were, a sheet of the Testament; he would drink it dry of all content, and then give that sheet to the wind. He was in complete communication with big Kemper now, the first time ever. The words and thoughts and spirit of that huge and often inarticulate dead man came tumbling into Dana without barrier or language or obstacle of tortured expression. Dana imbibed the sheets as well in the dark as in the lightning flashes. He began to know what Kemper was all about; he digested that man as if he were eating his flesh given freely. Kemper had been the more intelligent of mind, Dana the more intelligent of body; but there had been so many gaps in all of them (in Kemper more than in any) that it seemed those gaps would never be filled. Now that big poetry-stuffed rowdy from the Germanies was filling in many gaps in Dana, and forever. Dana was taking on much of the power and personality of Kemper and making it his own. This was the Testament.

"Man the cannons!" Dana cried loudly in a voice that rang through the whole ship and dwarfed the voice of the gale. "Array them all on starboard and lash them fast. Pack them and ball them and fire-ball them. This is on the advice of Kemper."

"Who is Kemper?" Osborne the Englishman lifted a high question. But he wasn't questioning the order; he was going to the cannon.

"It matters no bit who is Kemper!" Damisa gusted in his own gale voice. "Dana is ship-master, and it's all to the cannons!" But Dana himself lent no hand. He still sat on the three legged stool and read (drank in, rather) the strange Testament in total dark and in crooked dancing light. His own eyes were the best when he used them, but now he preferred to look through the privileged eyes of a dead man.

"We'll cannon on a down-roll," Dana cried, "just an instant before the Gates, before the Pickled Shark, cannons. The Shark is sheer south of us, close on starboard, closer than she believes. Ifreann peers. He has night-eyes as I have. Kemper never had them in life but he has them now. How he has them now!"

"I have night eyes," Carolina of the monkey-face chattered clear and high. "We are the lower ship and we love it closer. We are near too close for the Gates of Hell to bring to bear on us."

"Ready is it?" Dana called after a while, but he had given no glance at all at the scene. He was still busy with the sheets of the Testament and had not once turned his night-eyes towards the hovering enemy.

"Ready," called Osborne.

"Fast alert," called Damisa.

"*Al alcance*," called Serafino Tirana.

The *Catherine* gave a great roll to port, and then started back from that steep roll. The command was given on the down roll.

"*Fuego, fire!*" Dana cried, and a deeper voice within Dana's voice also roared "*Schiessen lassen.*"

There was simultaneous cannonade from the *Catherine Dembinska* and from the *Brami Piekielne* the shark-ship named the Gates of Hell; aye, and cannonade from the low sleet-shining sky.

The two ships flamed and coughed and thundered at one another.

## VIII

### IN GLORIOUS DEFEAT

*We sinned in supercilious  
And ruled in horny-handed right.  
He fell to newer ways, yet we  
Have left a germ to germ the night.*

*A man more man than other men  
Was wary of a statement wrong.  
He built a holding way, and then  
Withdrew from it. And he'd been strong.*

*We, honest late (when we are dead),  
On upward path (with curt'led feet),  
Defy that devils rob our red,  
Or steal our glorious defeat.*

—Auctore

We examine now the situation at the bordering of the four nations. The four nations were: Brazil, Banda Oriental (Uruguay), Paraguay, and Argentina or La Plata. These borderings had generated storm centers which are called *ciclones*.

“Wait, wait, wait!” cry voices. “You’ll not leave us in the icy lurch there. The journal may not adjourn so. What of the action off the Horn?”

But the action off the Horn was, of necessity, an adjourned action. It was only the first booming clash of a running battle that would last for three years. To end it now would only end it in the destruction of the *Catherine Dembinska*.

For the shark-ship, the *Gates of Hell*, was an iron clad. This was revealed on the first salvo. Dana must have known it in the bottom of his mind from his first sight of that ship, from a certain clumsiness in her off-shore stance. He had now been half expecting the heavy sound of an iron-clad under cannoning. He’d heard it at Valparaiso, though it was quite a new thing; one of the ship-targets on Dana’s harbor raid at Valparaiso had been an iron-clad. And something or someone, probably Kemper in his Testament, had been informing Dana that Ifreann’s *Gates of Hell* would be an iron-clad.

An iron-clad can be taken, of course. It can be had. It can be

breached and smashed and sunk. But a wooden ship can be smashed much more easily, much more quickly. The *Catherine* could not stand and trade heavy shot with the *Brami* with any degree of success. Besides, Dana knew that this was not meant to be the main action, the final action.

But the *Catherine* could strike devastatingly, and then run like a wraith. To take advantage of this, Dana had first ordered that the *Catherine's* cannons should be fire-balled as well as heavy ball.

*Andanada y trueno!* The *Catherine* fire-balled the whole superstructure of the *Brami*, fouling and creasing the funnel, cracking yards, igniting sails and lines, snapping and separating sheets and shrouds. Luck, luck, you cannot beat luck like that.

Then the heavy-balling on the far down-roll took the *Brami* solidly at the waterline. The cannons didn't break or breach her, not at one volley, but they sprained and loosened her; they shattered some timbers beneath her iron-plates, they opened for enough sea to be of some concern, they discommoded her. The *Brami* hadn't been born as an iron-clad any more than she'd been born a steam ship. She was an improvised thing, more outlandishly so than even the *Catherine*.

And the peering Ifreann, having his own night-eyes only and not using dead-man eyes (though he had contact with many dead men) had miscalculated. He hadn't realized that the *Catherine* was quite so close, quite so small, quite so low in comparison to his own ship, even though she rode too high in the water. His cannonade was too high on her, taking one top-gallant only and doing no other immediate damage. Luck, luck of the Irish, luck of the English, luck of the Haussa, luck of the Sardinian-Spanish (that was Serafino), and luck of the Spanish-Greeks (that was our beloved monkey-face Carolina). And the *Catherine* was running under full steam and full sail now; the too light, too high, too-tipsy ship was on a real scamper.

She rolled fearfully again, and once more cannoned the *Brami* on the down-roll. Luck again, and more luck. Confusion and consternation on the *Brami* and a floundering there, while the *Catherine* skipped.

Luck had rolled for the *Catherine*, as a ship rolls. Then she was away from it all, fast—before luck should roll back in the other direction. She had hamstrung the larger ship for a while. She left it.

The *Brami* would have to land and repair; at Rio Gallegos, perhaps, or in the double estuary of the Chico and Santa Cruz, though there were no real facilities in either place. And the *Catherine* was on the northern swing, furthest and fastest, not

likely to be overtaken within a thousand miles, not before Bahia Blanca, perhaps not before Montevideo itself.

The *Catherine* did, in fact, put into Bahia Blanca for two days, and left there reprovisioned, repaired, and reinvigorated. And there was still no sign of the pursuing *Brami*. She might be taking a wider sea-way, but it was believed that she was still behind.

It was on the voyage from Bahia Blanca to Montevideo that Serafino Tirana killed the guanaco. It had become an intolerable animal, and for all its love-sickness it had become quite a fat animal. Serafino killed it and roasted it and served it as a big feast for all of them. They had all loved the woolly fellow and all been exasperated with him. They hated to see that antic animal go, but they were glad that it was down themselves that it was going so delightfully.

"It's as though I were eating my own suitor," said that monkey-faced beauty, our own Carolina. "He always liked me so much, and I certainly do like him now. I wonder if you will be so flavorsome, Serafino, if we ever come to such dire straits that it is I or you. You'd not doubt which would be the eater and which the eaten in that case, would you, Serafino?"

Nobody doubted that Carolina would be the eater and not the eaten if it ever came to such dire straits. She'd have had any of them, hungrily and gaily and directly, just as a smaller shrew will kill and eat a larger snake, tearing and eating the very jaw muscles of it first. Pray God that it never comes to such dire straits with any of them.

Another nine days and they came to Montevideo on the East Bank (the name of its country, indeed, was The East Bank, La Banda Oriental) of the great La Plata estuary which was here more than fifty miles wide.

They came and sea-anchored offshore. And three hours later, Ifreann came with his own *Gates of Hell*. But there could be no conflict between those two ships here. This was war, and this was the standing water of a war fleet. There was fleet-master and harbor-marshal. There were two hundred ships of fifteen nations standing there, and they were under unified command. Both the *Catherine Dembinska* and the *Brami Piekiele*, of necessity, came under that same unified command.

So they came to worldly, cosmopolitan, polyglot Montevideo. That cow-town, that back-water (the Plata water really did back along Montevideo in its huge disgorgement), hide and salt-beef port; that ramshackle wharfage was all those urbane and worldly things? Yes, this busy and unfinished town was all those things now, and had been so for near a decade. To explain quickly the

situation at the bordering of the four nations: Brazil, La Banda Oriental (Uruguay), Paraguay, and Argentina or the Republic of La Plata. These borderings had generated storm centers which are called ciclones, and Montevideo had been such storm center for the longest.

The four countries then, quickly:

Good Paraguay is poor and proud;  
'tis woods and grass and boulders.  
Of exports only three allowed:  
Tall timber, beef, and soldiers.

Brazil is in a doldrum sea  
With Pedro on the throne.  
She'd murder in a troop of three  
Who'd murder not alone.

La Plata is a platitude;  
The Rosas thing is flat:  
Then why the monster mob intrude  
With reek and rogue and rat?

La Banda's under Eastern Sun  
And polyglottal stews,  
More babble-ish than Babylon  
And jew-er than the Jews.

There, we hope that explains the political and practical situation of the four countries. These things being so, naturally there was conflict and the hope of conflict. And the promise of blood attracts unusual dignitaries: the Lord of the Ghouls and all his hangers-on; and the Lord of the Flies.

But Dana and his company found good society in Montevideo. The atmosphere of the town reminded Dana a little of Krakow, but there was an artificiality here that hadn't been in Krakow. Krakow had always been under siege, internal and external siege, and had been marked to great depth by those sieges.

And Montevideo had been under siege; those had been her years of soul and storm. There was something effete about it all, though, as though it hadn't been genuine blood and storm. The Argentine dictator Rosas loomed as true devil to all these conglomerate people of Montevideo, except that the conglomerates believed in no devil or spirit, believed in nothing but matter, and said so always. Nevertheless, Rosas was the worst bugger one would ever find. No, it is true that Rosas himself had not besieged Montevideo, but he had been friendly to him who had.

The siege of Montevideo had actually been lifted six years before; Dana was surprised to learn this. It had been lifted bloodlessly. It had, as a matter of fact, been carried on bloodlessly,

and incompletely all through it. Some trade had been allowed to the city, but the city had been restricted.

The fact was, however, that Montevideo still acted as though she were under siege, under bloody and devastating siege. The role of City Under Siege had proved a hard role for her to forego.

Dana talked about this with an overblown man who seemed to be high in the conglomerate society of Montevideo. This man was no other than the Lord of the Flies. And in attendance of the Lord of the Flies there were always numbers of rakish literary men.

There was Esteban Echeverría the guitar-playing *fingido-gaucha* and translator of Byron; José Marmol the author of the un-great *Amalia*; Bartolome Mitre who wrote the un-famous *Memoirs of a Rosebud*, and also verse-dramas such as *El Poeta*; Vincent Lopez in his wan role as the External Exile (though nobody ever prevented him from recrossing the Plata River to his Argentine home); Alberdi and Gutierrez; del Rio and Rivadeneira; Mora, and Bello (another translator of Byron—almost all of these men translated Byron and Victor Hugo); Sarmiento and Viola; Jotabeche and Sanfuentes; Cesar Díaz and Adriano Díaz. There was quite a midge-cloud of the scribblers. Some of them came and went, to Venezuela, to Chile, to Spain, to London, to Paris, to Sardinia, and to Italy. But just at this time there was peculiar gathering of them in Montevideo.

"I am the Lord, they are the Flies," said the over-blown man who was known as the Lord of the Flies. "If there were not writers around one to despise, one would have to despise oneself. You are sure, young man, that you are not a *nipote* of the Count Cyril?"

"I'm no blood nephew that I know of," Dana said, "nor have I ever seen him (that I know of). But I'll be no Peter to deny him. I've wanted to see him and know him. And I've taken his coin."

"Have you been bought by his coin?"

"I've been hired by it, I think. I'm mostly left without direction. I come and encounter and wonder."

"I have more coin than the Count Cyril," said the Lord of the Flies. "But I buy with it. I do not hire. And I give clear direction. You would go, and do, and be spared the wonder."

"I'd not like to be spared it entirely," Dana said. "But why do you, from all over the world, crowd into this rough landing on the Plata estuary? You crowd here and gibber. The siege (such as it was, and it wasn't much from what I can find) was lifted six years ago. By what are you still besieged?"

"The horrible dictator Rosas still lives and rules, in Argentina, in the Buenos Aires district across the river. It is for this reason that Montevideo is full of exiles, from Buenos Aires itself, from the



northern wilds of La Banda where the government still rules, from London, from Paris, from Italy."

"How should Rosas over the river force exiles out of Italy into unbesieged Montevideo?"

"With Rosas unfallen, there can be ease nowhere in the world," the Lord of the Flies said.

"What is this man? Is he Rome that you wait for him to fall?"

"Exactly. He is Rome. Not Rome Resurgent, but Rome Eternal. We'll not allow any eternal thing. That is the reason for the gathering and excitement here. Till Rosas falls, nothing can be done."

"There is active voice to every predication," Dana said. "If you want him to fall, fell him."

"Young man, I've been waiting for you these months unwittingly. Let us talk business," said the Lord of the Flies. Dana went with that overblown man and talked business in a quiet and secluded place. And nobody except Dana himself and the man known as the Lord of the Flies would ever know just what words passed between them. Was the Lord of the Flies the mysterious man who was also named Count Ouzel Rotwappen? He may have been; it isn't at all certain.

Montevideo was full of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spanishmen, Italians, Chileños, countryless men, and natives who had grown a foreign look on them in that latest puzzling decade. There were Indians, also, and mixed blood, and Gauchos who have horse and cattle blood in their veins and not human blood at all. But, head for head, there were probably more Italians than anything else in Montevideo.

"Oh but there are a lot of us here," an Italian man said to Serafino Tirana who was himself partly of the blood. "We greatly outnumber the Spanish here now. I believe that we were first accepted as a harmless substitution for the Spanish (though we are not harmless) a third of a century ago when the feeling against the Spanish was very strong. We've been coming here for a long time, and they've forgot to count us. Some of us have come from fragmented Italy herself, some from Sicily and Sardinia, some from France and from London, from the whole floating world of exiles and flotsam. And some of us have been hatched here on the spot, out of gaucho horse-nests and mule-eggs."

This seemed to be a good natured man under an unusual sadness. He clearly took Serafino as a newly arrived Italian, and he spoke to him in Italian.

"And there was a great hatcher, a great cackler and crower who has but recently risen from one of these horse-nests," the man

continued with his sad-smiling voice, "and he's left a large hatching here that is neither fowl nor flesh nor horse-meat. I greatly fear that I am of that hatching myself."

"What man was that?" Serafino asked him.

"It was the great Garibaldi (why is there something a little unsalted about the taste of his name in my mouth?), it was the great Garibaldi who has gone back to Europe these last several years to see about the resurrection of Italy. But for near a decade he had hatched strange chicks around this estuary."

"Great things are whispered about him," Serafino commented.

"Who has whispered them longer than myself? He is a man who looks and acts like a leader. And your own leader, *signorino*, is a puzzle to me. He has grown larger. You do not know that? On some of my trips, I saw him about Europe several years ago (I'm not sure that he remembers me). He is a larger man now than he was then. He is taller. He is bigger. He is still on the green side of the hill, but he is too far past boyhood and youth to grow in height so in not much more than three years."

"He's done it in not much more than three weeks," Serafino said, "or else my own eyes have deceived me, and I've been with him every day of the time. I agree that he's a puzzle. He himself says, and I'm not sure that he's joking, that he has taken on aspects, both of spirit and body, of a certain man, now dead, who was of his company. And this man was a near giant in body, so Dana says. Now I do not believe that this thing is possible, but I believe that Dana believes it. I do not myself believe that Dana has grown so in three weeks, but my eyes believe that he has. Something else has come over him yesterday and today, though."

(Well, Dana *had* grown a little taller and larger in these last several weeks, or else he had fooled more eyes than those of Serafino or of the Italian man. We will not here aver that he had grown larger, only that he seemed to have.)

"Are you totally committed to this leader Dana?" the man asked.

"No, I am not totally committed to anyone, not even to Christ," Serafino said, "though I should be. So far I've found no reason not to follow Dana."

"He has taken money from the Lord of the Flies to kill Rosas," the man said.

"You don't know that he has, man."

"No, I don't know that he has, but I almost know it. It's as near plain as a thing can be."

"Well, don't you *want* Rosas dead?" Serafino asked. "Isn't he the bloodiest and most oppressive leader in all South American history?"

"So we all say," the man mumbled. "Hasn't he oppressed? Hasn't he robbed? Hasn't he tortured? Hasn't he murdered?"

"So we all say, young man," the man mumbled again. "But no, the second of the four counts isn't true. He hasn't robbed. Even ourselves haven't been able to phrase that against him."

"But wouldn't it be better if he were murdered then? Dana could and would do it, for pay or without pay, if he were convinced that it would clean the situation."

"Something will not permit me to say that it were better if he were murdered, *Signore Tirana*," the man spoke in some agitation. "I suppose that I could say 'It were better that he should die,' but then it comes to my mind that a High Priest said 'It were better that one man should die for the people' and I begin to doubt it."

"You are a *rosso*, a red, are you not?" Serafino asked. "And Rosas isn't. He's a *bianco*, a white. And the two parties, in all the Plata countries, are deadly enemies. Is that not so?"

"Unfortunately it is so," the man said. "The two parties, the *Colorados* and the *Blancos* as they are called locally, are deadly enemies. And therefore Rosas is my deadly enemy and I wish him dead."

Serafino looked at the man closely and was startled. There were tears glinting in the man's eyes.

"This man Rosas," Serafino said, "this man of whom I have heard no good word spoken since I arrived here, of whom I have heard no good word spoken ever (except once, possibly, in my childhood, and that not sure), this monster, this murderer, this oppressor, you do hate him, do you not?"

"We will be overheard," the man said.

"In this babble, we will not be overheard," Serafino assured him.

The man stretched his neck (he was a short man) and whispered in Serafino's ear:

"The man Rosas, I love him."

Serafino went through the crowd and got brandy in glasses for himself and the man. They set the glasses on a sideboard there. They lit cigars. They were silent together for some time.

"I assume that you have known the man Rosas closely," Serafino said then.

"I have not. I have not been fortunated even to speak to him. I have seen him only once."

"Then I must guess that he is somehow of impressive or igniting person or personality."

"He isn't, *signore Tirana*. He looks more common than such a leader could possibly be. He couldn't, I believe, have been very impressive of looks even when he was younger. Now he's aged a

bit and gone pudgy.”

“Then why the love for him, since it seems to run against the grain?” Serafino asked.

“There is a right and a wrong. This man Rosas has been right, and in so clumsy a manner as can hardly be believed. And we, we the mobbish meddlers from everywhere, how adroitly we have been wrong! Oh how cleverly, how brilliantly we have been wrong!”

A little clarification here on the colors and on the color words. The colors hadn't quite the meaning then that they have now. As a matter of odd fact, Juan Manuel de Rosas, the Mainstay of the Blancos or Whites, or the conservative, the decentralized, the Federalist parties of all the Plata countries, had been the nineteenth century inventor of both the red flag and the red shirt. They had been his early trademark. They hadn't any great symbolism for him. The red was for the Gaucho energy and its surging blood; and it was a pun on his own name. It was in La Banda Oriental and not in Argentina that civil war arose between parties calling themselves *Blancos* and *Colorados*, the Whites and the Reds. At the time we come to, the red flag had not yet been preempted by the Communists, though it had been adopted as the flag of the red revolution in Europe three or four years before. In La Banda Oriental, the red shirts had been adopted by Garibaldi and his group. He had first bought them cheap from a Montevideo warehouse to equip his growing band; they were shirts of a popular color among the poorer classes, and they were available. There was no incongruity in red-shirted workmen fighting for the White party, or for the Red or for any party. With Garibaldi, the symbolism grew later, after he had returned to Europe. The red shirts were more unusual there, they made a great splash and distinguishing mark. But Rosas, the essential Blanco, the early and earnest enemy of the red revolution in all its phases, was not forgiven to that day or to this for his first use of the red shirt and the red flag.

Other shirts had begun to blossom in Montevideo now, black shirts of the anarchists, blue shirts of the Greater Columbia countries to the north and of Central America, gold shirts of Bolivia and Ecuador, tricolor shirts after some of the new national flags. Even the green shirts of the men (and the girl-woman) from the *Catherine Dembinska* were imitated within days, seemingly within hours. There were dyers and textile men in Montevideo hasty to give any color wanted. Such *Blancos*, Whites, as were in Montevideo (and it was life's danger to be known as a Blanco

there) were partial to blue shirts and gold shirts. Enough of shirts.

Ifreann Chortovitch was indeed in Montevideo, but he was (for the moment) the most subdued Ifreann that Dana had known. He sought Dana out at a social gathering and questioned him.

"My uncle, the Lord of the Flies, has paid you to kill Rosas," he said. "Whyever did he not give me the job, Dana?"

"Possibly because you are incompetent, Ifreann. The Lord of the Flies is your uncle?"

"He is my uncle, the brother of my father who is the Devil. Although my father is by far the greater, yet in the hierarchy (with us it should properly be called the anierocracy) the Lord of Flies is my superior until I have attained my majority. I cannot understand his selecting you for this. I cannot question him, so I will question you."

"When will you attain your majority, Ifreann? You're surely of age as a man."

"Am I a man, Dana? You yourself know that I am more than man."

"I know you to be less than a man. But what is the age of majority among monsters?"

"That I can't say, Dana. Time runs a little different with us. In a hundred years, I would guess, I will be of age. He has hired you, and you will kill Rosas?"

"No. I think I'll kill you instead, Ifreann. That's more to my liking."

"It isn't quite the time that one of us should kill the other, Dana. It's been deferred, I don't know by whom. If it had been time for it, I'd have killed you off the Horn. Since you'll not answer my questions, then let us at least enjoy each other's company here. You'll not deny that we've had high old times together, and we are the only two interesting persons in the city."

"I find many interesting persons here, Ifreann, and you not among them. Be gone, you bumbling boy."

"You are afraid to be alone in my company. You are afraid of my mind and my power."

"No longer, Ifreann, no longer. You are out of power and out of mind."

"I am genuinely puzzled about another thing," Ifreann said. "You are not like ourselves. With you persons there must be observation of the times and the intervals. This has been ordained from the beginning. With us, a man may come of age at one hundred years, or one thousand. He may be born within one week of his conception, or the time may be five years. He may grow to

man's size in two years, or in two hundred. We aren't bound by the flow of time."

"Or by the flow of sanity, Ifreann. Mad devils we are used to, though. A sane devil would be almost unpleasant. You'll never be unpleasant in that way, I know that, Ifreann. But what are you saying?"

"How have you and the Catherine had this daughter? There was no time for you to have had her. It's not much more than three years since you met the Catherine. You were married to her not much more than ten days till her death. Your times are not random like ours. There was no time either before or after. There was not time for the daughter to be gestated or born. There was no time for her to grow up, for she is near grown up and already married herself. Even myself was hardly so large at three years old, nor nearly so mature as she."

"Ifreann, you are completely insane. How could Carolina be the daughter of myself and Catherine?"

"That is what I ask you. And now I will have to kill her. I can't allow any of that seed to survive. There is another thing, Dana. Who is the child in the child's casket that you carry along on your travels since Amsterdam? This is, I divine it, a son and not a daughter. There was certainly no room for two births by the Catherine. Did she twin? This son also I will have to kill, if he does live. Just what is the state of the child and the child's casket, Dana?"

"There's no child, Ifreann. It's true, though, that there are child's bones in the box; more sometimes than others. I don't understand this. There is other junk in the box: papers that appear and disappear, remnants that I cannot place, letters that were mailed to me from Europe only the day before. I don't know the why of the box. I don't know why I am burdened with it. It's very untidy what is inside it. Like your mind."

Ifreann moved off from him then. They were both puzzled about a lot of things.

But Ifreann had no lack of company. The flies gathered around him. He was a great center of attention wherever he went. He did have a power and a mind. He was subdued only with Dana. He was a most exciting and compelling creature, a huge, coarse, handsome, and incredible person. There hadn't been anyone else like him.

Damisa the Leopard came to Dana very sullenly.

"We have never quarreled, Dana," he said. "We have never lied. Tell me the truth now. Have you taken money from the Ghoul to

kill Rosas?"

"Once I took money to kill a man and did not kill him. Several times I have killed men free. I have never yet killed a man for money."

"But you haven't answered me."

"I haven't, Damisa, and I will not."

"I am going to Rosas, Dana. To kill him you will have to kill me first."

"No such thing. I could circumvent you a dozen different ways. Go then. We will meet again."

"I don't leave you in friendship, Dana."

"I see you go in friendship. Yes, I know you will be able to find Rosas, and I will be able to. I don't know anyone else out of this city who would be able to find him."

So Damisa left, not entirely in friendship with Dana. But why should Damisa the Leopard be going to Rosas, a man of whom he could not possibly have heard a good word anywhere?

Dana Coscuin had been faking a lot. He didn't know much about the situation, and he knew almost nothing about the Argentine dictator Rosas. He would find out what he could, but in Montevideo there were only the Rosas enemies to gain information from; they, and very few and very covert friends of that open and mysterious man.

Dana went onto his ship and attempted to talk to her.

"There are, of course, all sorts of things wrong with him," he said, "as there are with me, as there were with thee even. But there is something wrong with what they all say is wrong, there is something wrong about every enemy this man has who has so many of them. Tell it to me then, Catherine, is there any way that we can fit this bloody and foul man in? Is there anything green and growing about this tyrant? Is there contradiction about this that would shatter your heart and timbers? Could he have any part in the Green Revolution, or could I if I aid him?"

The idle rigging of the *Catherine Dembinska* sighed and laughed. Catherine had her own way of answering. There were spook voices all through her. She'd always been multi-voiced. A confusion of voices, but they were all her own. Then there came words, or at least meaning, in Catherine's own special inner tone.

"Green? Of course he is green, Dana. He is overgrown with green; he's green field and forest and pampas. Why, he has more green things growing out of his navel than all the foreign flies of Montevideo have ever seen in all their lands and days."

Why, this was astounding! Catherine had always hated every tyranny so much, every oppression. But she had always been

unexpected in her thinking, had always known the things behind their appearances. Dana laughed. Why, he'd have a battle against the tides yet, and he'd not be wrong to have it. It was delicious to talk to his wife-ship sometimes. He only wished that he could talk with her more completely.

"I'm mad, Catherine, as mad as Ifreann, but not with the same madness. I'll ask you a mad question then, his own question, but maybe in a cleaner madness than he asked it. Is the beautiful monkey-face girl Carolina somehow of our issue? Are the sometimes bones in the little coffin at all of our issue? What say you, swan and sloop; what say you, girl and green galleon?"

Skittish laughter of rigging and timbers again. The answer like a bird flying down and almost landing on the scrubbed deck.

"A little bit of our issue, both, Dana. We were meant to issue whole worlds, Dana, and we will do it vicariously or directly, but we will do it. The gawky devil doesn't understand how it is, and it worries him."

"It worries me too, wench," Dana growled. "Had any man ever so maddening a wife as mine?"

But, of all the people that Dana talked to, it was mostly the remarkable and intelligent poor people of Montevideo, the people so poor that they did not have to adhere either to the *Colorados* party or to the *Blancos*, who told Dana about the man Rosas and about the mind-flow of all the Plata countries. Dana was impressed by the profundity and sophistication of these poor in contrast to the simplistic and superficial thought of the Montevideo rich and worldly people. Damisa had once told Dana much the same thing about the poor people of Africa.

"Europeans and Americans haven't this sophistication in political matters," Damisa had said. "They are like children before the people of Africa, especially the poor people of Africa. I don't understand the necessity for a man or a group to forget to think when he has learned to read, but in practice it works like that. It's as though one had signed covenant, as soon as one had learned to sign, that only one man in a hundred of you should thereafter be able to think and that the others should agree in all things with this thinking man (even though his own thinking should be shallow). It seems to me that this is too high a price to pay for literacy. No such price is exacted for the other little tricks of hand and eye and mind.

"For this reason, in much of Africa, it is only slaves of Arabian derivation who are allowed to be literate, to carry out certain necessary functions of communication and record; and there is protection set up against these literates ever having position that



requires intelligence or thought."

Damisa's views were too extreme and he didn't live by them himself. He had begun to be literate; it is, after all, no great trick for a grown man to learn to read. But now Damisa had gone to Rosas.

This Rosas, Dana was learning as much about him as he could, was born in Buenos Aires in 1793, so he wasn't really old: either fifty-eight or fifty-nine now. He had soldiered first when he was thirteen years old, against the British invaders of his homeland; he had already been man-sized and man-minded. When he was sixteen he was put in charge of his father's barony, very extensive cattle and land holdings. He was competent at the managing, but he didn't want it. "A good man is able to build his own barony, as large and as rich as he wants it," he said. He gave it all up; he refused his inheritance and patrimony, and it was one of the richest in all the Americas. He went native.

Rosas always claimed to have some Indian blood. But others say that he had none at all. He was a blue-eyed fair man of Spanish ancestry. But he became a white Indian, a Gaucho of the Gauchos, the King of the Gauchos. He was the finest rider, the finest shot, the finest knife-man, the finest lasso man, the finest boleadoras man among the Gauchos; this meant, according to the Gauchos themselves, that he was the finest man in the world in all these things. He imbibed the boisterous cruelty and high-spirited blood-thirstiness of the Gauchos.

The Gauchos, in spite of their affection and affectation of Indian ways and costuming, and in spite of their free mixture and intermarriage for a long time, were about three parts White for one part Indian. They have been painted redder than they were.

The King of the Gauchos went into business. With two other men (Rosas was then about twenty-two) he started a meat-salting plant. They cured their own meat and shipped it on their own ships. A special law had to be passed against them (they were avoiding the Buenos Aires customhouse). They did well, though, and paid not too much attention to the law against them.

The King of the Gauchos went into marriage to one María de la Encarnación Ecurra (the Scarlet Woman); Rosas dressed her always in scarlet and she was a dazzling figure.

The King of the Gauchos went into politics. He already had many men and many thousands of acres, more than his father had ever had. He aided Rodriguez into power as governor of Buenos Aires providence; then broke with him. He backed Rivadavia, and then broke with him also. He was sent to deal with the Indians on the demarcation line in the south. He dealt

competently, built new forts, earned the trust of the wilder Indians (and never lost it). Effectively settled Argentina was then only about half its present area: south of the Rio Negro it was still mostly wild Indian country. Rosas backed Dorrego, a good man.

There was uprising led by Lavalle, and Dorrego was murdered. Rosas raised a Gaucho army and moved on Buenos Aires. The junta convened and made Rosas governor of Buenos Aires. And he imposed peace. This was in 1829 when Rosas was about thirty-six years old.

Rosas was a Federalist. He believed that government should be kept loose and local. He believed that the various provinces, Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos, Corrientes, Santa Fe, Córdoba, San Juan, Pampa, Rio Negro and others should be self-governed and even greatly decentralized within themselves (under various local Caudillos or leaders in association under the provincial governor); and that the league of provinces into a nation should be an even looser one. Rosas believed that the United Provinces of the Plata or Argentina should be only a shadow concept within the larger United Provinces of South America. He wasn't a nationalist. He was a total localist.

He never held higher office than that of governor of the province of Buenos Aires, and yet for many years he was effective dictator of all Argentina by means of his overpowering friendships with the other governors and caudillos. It was sometimes said that he claimed Uruguay (La Banda Oriental) as a part of Argentina. He didn't. He considered it a neighboring province, like the other neighboring provinces, and likewise entitled to his overpowering friendship. Rosas was always sad when his strong friendship was refused.

Serafino Tirana came to Dana Coscuin in some agitation one day. "This town of Montevideo is Babylon," he said. "You know that, do you not? It's a babble almost to high heaven, and nothing can be done here. Besides, the battle will be elsewhere. It will be fought in higher Mesopotamia, not here in Babylon itself."

Mesopotamia, Between-the-Rivers land, Entre Rios, was indeed the province where the final stand of Rosas would be made.

"Is it true that you have taken money to betray and kill Rosas, Dana?" Serafino asked now.

"To betray him, yes, not to kill him."

"You betray us all then, Dana. You are not really taken in by the babble talk of this queer city. You know the right and wrong of it. I am going to Rosas now, and Carolina with me. If you betray him, then you are our enemy when you come into the Rosas country."

"I will betray him, and I will come into the Rosas country. I'll see him felled. And I'll see you again, Serafino, and it may be that yourself and Damisa and others may understand the reason for it then."

Serafino and Carolina left Dana and went up-country. Several of them had already left Dana.

The enemies of Rosas had always been the Unitarios, the United Ones, the advocates of strong central government. They wanted a single government, and the international revolutionaries also wanted a single government in every nation everywhere. Central governments can be grabbed off by sudden assault; governments diffused into scattered local parts and sub-parts cannot be. The enemies of Rosas insisted that even Rosas must head a central government, and he refused. They insisted that he should become legally stronger, and he would not; practically he was already too strong for them. The strong man stood in the way of strong government; he didn't believe in it.

The situation had gone on for twenty-two years with Rosas governor of Buenos Aires most of that time. The Unitarios were everywhere the allies of the Revolutionaries. But the blue-and-white banners of the Revolutionaries had almost everywhere been supplanted by the red flags of reactionary localism (to modern ears it sounds as if they had the colors backwards).

Rosas was cruel. An American resident of Buenos Aires, J. Anthony King, stated that Rosas hung his victims in the market place of Buenos Aires with the label 'beef with the hide' on them. King's report is wrong only in using the plural. Rosas never repeated himself. He used other labels on other bodies, of course; but he killed fewer men in all his years than any other dictator had, and his years had been longer.

Rosas had stepped down once (1832 to 1835), stating (honestly, perhaps) that he had no wish to govern any longer. Three weak governors (Balcarce, Viamonte, Maza) filled the interval. None could control the city or the province; and the United Provinces of the Plata was secure only when its most populous province of Buenos Aires was secure. Rosas was called back. He swore "We will hound to death the infidel, the blasphemer, the thief ... and all who dare scoff at our Holy Faith ... until not one such monstrous person survives among us. The All-Powerful will direct our steps." Rosas was sincere much of the time; sometimes he was carried away by his own eloquence. But infidels, blasphemers, thieves, and scoffers at the Holy Faith had entered the district in the two and a half years of Rosas' absence. And in

the sixteen years following his return they gathered like storms on the borders of the provinces, and particularly in the province named The East Bank (Uruguay), about which province there was dispute whether it was one of the United Provinces.

"One of the flies in the midge-cloud around your Lord of the Flies, will grow larger," a short Italian man told Dana one day. This was the same Italian man who had once told a lot of things to Serafino Tirana.

"Which one will grow larger, friend, and how large?" Dana asked.

"Mitre," the Italian man said.

"Mitre? The un-celebrated author of the *Memoirs of a Rosebud*? But isn't he the sorriest scribbler of them all?"

"Not quite, man Coscuin. Marmol is an even sorrier scribbler."

"Oh yes, I'd forgotten about *him*. There are so many of the flies. How large will he grow?"

"Big enough to rule the entire country."

"He'll not take over from Rosas!"

"No, no, not directly. His take-over is somewhat in the future. But Rosas must go."

"Ah yes, man, but easy and orderly. We'll see about his going."

Rosas still seemed strong, for all that he had the revolutionaries of a dozen countries gathered hysterical against him. He still had the strong friendship of his fellow governors, of Urquiza the governor of Entre Ríos in particular. It was hard to see how the man could be brought down when all his fellow governors still stood with him. But the opposition rose and rose and rose, and the forces gathered. England and France sent forces, official and unofficial, against Rosas. Pedro II the Emperor of Brazil sent forces, as did Carlos Antonio Lopez who was dictator of Paraguay. The Colorados of Uruguay gathered in their total numbers, and the *Unitarios* of all the United Provinces, of Argentina. Argentina was prosperous, for one thing, and the other lands weren't; there was jealousy. Rosas had been in office for too long; there is always jealousy in this. And there were the wreckers from all over the world, and they love to wreck. Besides this, Rosas was a very crude man and the time was past for men of his sort.

"This opposition will not cease," the Italian man said. "It will build up till it reaches the very sky. It will break the sky. I myself would like to see Rosas go, but not to be succeeded by *them*."

"I will see what I myself can do," Dana told him.

Dana Coscuin, with such crewmen as he had left, and with three new crewmen, three quite bright new crewmen, slipped out of

anchorage one night and took the *Catherine Dembinska* up river.

Two evenings later, they docked at Buenos Aires, upstream and on the west bank of the Plata estuary, a distance of not more than a hundred and thirty miles. The *Catherine* had wished to go without engine, to play and tack with the wind, to go against the waters and with the back-waters. Buenos Aires was a larger town than Montevideo by half, and a much less nervous town. The people and officials of Buenos Aires cared not at all who docked at their docks, friend or enemy, in war or in peace.

There were better accommodations to be found than in Montevideo, but there wasn't the high society nor the foreign flavor. There weren't any flies. There were booted men of the city, there were booted men of the pampas the Gauchos, those South American cowboys. There were grain-men and boat-men and wool-weavers.

But Dana was known there. He was now such a personage as would be recognized even in a strange city. But he had a bad name now to go with his bright appearance.

"Judas in the green shirt," the people called to him. "You'll not find one man in all the province who'll betray our leader. Ask where you will; you'll not be able to subvert even one. You've come in vain." They laughed at Dana. They let him alone. They were serene in themselves and their leader.

Almost all serene. But one knowledgeable man did come to Dana in his hotel that evening and talked to him.

"I agree that Rosas will have to go, Irishman," this knowledgeable man said. "Rosas himself has been saying that Rosas will have to go, and been saying it for years. He has always been ready to step down. He's been sincere in that. He hasn't wanted the position.

"Here is the situation. Rosas has offered to call an election. His enemies announce that they will boycott any election. Rosas would convene the junta and ask that it name a governor, either temporary or for full-term. The enemies, the *unitarios*, say that they will not recognize the junta, that they will not take their own seats in the junta, that they will not recognize any governor, either temporary or full-term, who is named by the junta. We ask them 'Who *do* you want for governor of the province then?' 'Chaos,' they answer, 'We want Chaos for governor.' The fact is that they want to do away with the province and with all the provinces. They want to make another kind of world here. This is the whole matter of the dispute. The men from the foreign countries say that the men of the United Provinces are wild horses who will have to be broken and ridden. What business is it

of theirs if we are wild horses who don't want to be ridden? We have our loose freedom and we like it. We prosper in it."

"But the man Rosas is very cruel, is he not?" Dana asked.

"Yes he is. I don't like that in him. I'm told that he doesn't at all like it in himself. I am told, and it's truth what I'm told, that Rosas goes out at night in the wild country and crashes through thorn bushes naked to try to allay his cruelty and lust. He has Encarnación the Scarlet Woman for wife, and still he has other and stranger lusts. And he does have the cruelty. He'll kill a man in a passion; and he'll then near kill himself in flinging himself about in remorse. He's come almost to doubt his own present sanity, and many of us do doubt it.

"At one time we needed a strong violent man such as he was to preserve our weak and free system. Only strong people with a strong leader can afford the luxury of a weak government. What we need now is a strong un-violent man to do it, one of whose present sanity there is no doubt. Do you know of such a man?"

"I do. That is what I intend to arrange."

"Rosas would have been gone fifteen years ago if *they* didn't demand that he go. And he'll be gone immediately when they quiet their clamor for him to be gone. But we'll not give up our ways. The *Extranjeros* have already enslaved the East Bank province. They'll not enslave the others. What man do you believe you can turn against Rosas, Irishman, the instigator?"

"Oh, I'll try the biggest one first," Dana said frankly. "It will be the second man of all the United Provinces, Urquiza."

The man laughed at Dana like a pampas stallion laughing.

"Urquiza? The best friend of Rosas? The governor of Entre Rios? He'd never turn against Rosas, whatever differences of views they have."

The man horse-laughed Dana again and left him there.

The next morning Dana took the *Catherine Dembinska* on up the channel. Soon they were at the head of the Persian Gulf, as it were, at the head of the great Plata estuary that is grander than the gulf; and to the mouths of the two rivers of Mesopotamia, the Tigris (which is here named the Uruguay River) and the Euphrates (which is here named the Parana). But Babylon (which was Montevideo) was behind them and not located in the between-the-rivers region at all. Never mind, analogies will break down, and perhaps the sea had encroached on the rivers since ancient times. The mud banks here were at least as ancient as those of its Asian reflection, the rivers greater, and the land greener.

The Uruguay River came down wide and single; but the Parana

(the greater of the two rivers) was broken and scattered; it debouched through a dozen mouths. Dana went north up the broad single Uruguay River, with the eastern Uruguay Province on the right hand and the Entre Ríos Province on the left.

Somewhere along that west bank the Governor Urquiza would be waiting with a good nucleus of men which he could in a short time call up into an army. He would defend his province there from the Uruguayan and foreign hysteria, and he would defend his friend Rosas in Buenos Aires Province, if indeed that man needed any defending.

Well, if Urquiza was any tactician at all he would have posted himself at the lowest point on the Uruguay River where large groups of men could cross without elaborate boatage. And he was there, a little above the Entre Ríos town of Concepción del Uruguay, a little below the Uruguayan town named Paysandu.

Dana shored the *Catherine* on the west bank and went boldly and alone to find the Governor Urquiza.

Dana's ill fame had been here before him. He would not be well received by the governor, but he would be received. And he was received in a ranch-house of the region.

"What have you to say to me, Irish meddler?" Urquiza asked him shortly. "Your mouth has been heard on both sides of the estuary and up the river. What do you want?"

"I want to bring an end to these hostilities that have been sputtering for ten years," Dana stated, "and to bring them to a reasonable and right end. I want to prevent their ending in a horribly wrong way, as they easily could. The thing builds up high as the sky, one man told me, and it could break the very sky here."

"So far I agree," the Governor Urquiza said as he measured this stranger with his gaze. "I'm also attempting to prevent that horribly wrong ending of it all. How to do it, Irish man?"

"Declare against Rosas immediately, and announce that you are marching against him. That will give confidence to the other forces who have him so greatly outnumbered and are still afraid of him. You declare against him and move against him; then all will move against him. And he will be felled."

"Rosas is my best friend and fellow governor in the United Provinces. To declare against him would be betrayal."

"Certainly it would be betrayal. It is declaring against one's worst enemy that has a gentler name. But you must do this thing, whatever you call it."

"Why, insane man, why?" Should I be traitor, to Rosas as Lopez of Santa Fe was traitor to him in years past? Not only am I not a traitor, but I am a wise enough man to learn by example. Do you

know what happened to Lopez of Santa Fe?"

(That had been in 1838. The French had been trying to topple Rosas then, and it was to the French that caudillo Lopez had attempted to betray Rosas.)

"Oh, he failed in it, I'm told, and Rosas had him killed," Dana said. "But that may not happen to you. You're a more capable man than was Lopez."

"Yes, I am. And I'm a more honest man also. What do you expect to gain from this, Irishman? What will you do? Where will you go from here, if I do let you go?"

"I'll go straight to Rosas and tell him that he's been betrayed, that he had better make an end to his affairs in his own land, that he should get the best terms possible from his opponents. If you, and he, handle it right, he might get to safe exile somewhere out of the provinces, or out of the continent."

"And if I refuse to betray him, as I do refuse, what will you do?"

"I'll still go to Rosas. I'll tell him that I solicited your betrayal and that you refused it."

"This passes all understanding. Why did the Lord of the Flies select a fool for this?"

"His sort always selects fools for errands, Governor. But in me he selected a different sort of fool than he supposed."

"I let you go freely, fool. Go to Rosas. He'll do to you what I am tempted to do, but he has the greater flair for such things. Get out of here now! At once!"

"No, I will not. I have further things to say to your ears," Dana stated stubbornly.

"No. You will leave at once. At once!"

"Oh, then I'll cut off your ears and take them with me, Governor. I stated that I had more things to say to your ears and I'll say them to them, here, or on my way."

Governor Urquiza rose to his feet and looked at Dana in astonishment.

"That was spoken almost like a Gaucho, Irishman," he said. "All right, everybody leave the room for a moment. I will hear in private what this madman has to say to me."

All the attendants left. Dana Coscuin talked to the Governor Urquiza for half an hour. Then he left, went down to the shore where the *Catherine* was shored, and pulled her out into the river.

Governor Urquiza called horse-couriers and sent out the announcement that he was declaring against Governor Rosas of Buenos Aires, that he was activating army and marching against this Rosas, and that all forces of the Four Countries and all their foreign friends should also march against Rosas to fell him.



No, it was not hoax or trap or other device. Urquiza made true decision to move against his friend Rosas and bring him down, and he would bring him down.

And Dana Coscuin started to go to Rosas, as he had said that he would. He did not, however, go in the direction in which he knew Rosas to be; he went in the opposite direction. Dana knew that Rosas had not been in power so long without himself being a competent tactician. A competent tactician will not allow himself to be trapped in a box if he hears news of an alliance against himself. If he is really competent, he will learn of the news fast, and he will be out of the box fast.

No real hurry for Dana, though. Rosas could move rapidly on land, but the news had to come to him first, and Rosas would have to assemble his men (however swiftly he did that) and move a much greater distance by land than Dana would move by water.

Dana piloted the *Catherine Dembinska* lazily up the Uruguay River to the Rosas meeting. The *Catherine* was cranky. She was an ocean ship and disliked the narrowness of the river field and the invariance of the currents. She'd not have hurried if they'd been in a hurry. And they weren't. They shored often. It was January, high summer. The shore world was one of Ombu trees and cactus, but also good grass, and bad thistles which merged into worse thorns. Among the inhabitants of that Entre Ríos district was the *biscacha* which is something like a rabbit and something like a pack-rat and which has only three toes behind. It is good eating, but the locals who have so much beef do not bother with this small meat. And the little owl, the *Athene cunicularia*, was there. This bird was friend of the *biscacha* and they shared the same holes. They insured always that there would be a hooting night of it.

Dana missed the companionship of Damisa and of Serafino and Carolina. He had for friend only the Englishman Osborne and those who remained of the old crewmen. The three new crewmen were somehow more than crewmen and somehow less. They didn't know much about ships and boats, but they did know about agreements and documents and manifestos. They were interesting in their own ways, but they weren't true voyaging companions. They were really advocates, lawyers, men of affairs, diplomats of a sort, arrangers.

Some days had gone by. One day a rifle shot sang very close to Dana's head. He knew the voice of that rifle but he didn't believe it. And the next day another shot from that same rifle sang even closer to Dana's head. He believed it now.

"Old friend, we'll meet very soon," Dana said. "You'd not come

so close and miss twice if you meant to hit. It is but your way of saying hello to me, but there's a surly note to it."

Finally Dana shored the *Catherine* under brush-wood on the west bank of the Uruguay River in the neighborhood of Monte Caceros. This was at the three-nation junction of Uruguay and Brazil and Argentina (or at the four-nation junction, from another viewpoint; some Paraguayans claimed that Paraguay extended to this point). Dana stayed there and waited for appearance and actions.

Meanwhile, Rosas, deep within his own province of Buenos Aires, heard the news of the betrayal. He was puzzled by it, but he acted quickly. He hadn't a large army, he never had, he'd never needed one; he had an intrepid and expert army for the country of the United Provinces. He had it in motion within hours. He came out of the box. He'd not be caught between any diverse forces until he wanted to go between them and split them. He went behind Urquiza, south and west of him. He trespassed on the Province of Sante Fe, but none would contradict his way there; perhaps they remembered Lopez of Sante Fe.

It was a scattered scrim of men on horseback, and a file of bullock carts. Each cart was pulled by six bullocks. They were very long carts, but two-wheeled; the wheels, however, were as much as eight or ten feet in diameter. These baggage carts would traverse mud, very deep mud as was sometimes found in the Provinces, and bullocks with their spreading hooves can go through mud where even horses cannot.

The Rosas party crossed the Parana River a little above the city of Sante Fe on the west bank and the town of Sante Fe Bajada (now named Parana) on the east bank. Then it was clear across the Entre Ríos province to Monte Caseros in that queer corner of the province where all the nations come together.

Dana heard a new hooting of owls in the night, and a chatter of the *biscacha*, and he knew that something was moving. He heard the squeaking of the wheels of bullock carts, and the muffle of horses' hoofs. Rosas' scouts were out, and they were good. Just at dawn, one came to the river bank where the *Catherine* was shored under brushwood. The scout-rider leaped his horse solidly onto the *Catherine's* deck, spun him around, waved hand (in mutual respect) at Dana who sat on that little three-legged stool on deck, and leaped his horse off the deck and onto the brushwood shore again.

"That is a good scout," Dana said. "It's a good man he serves. Ah, but he'd been tipped off by another good man, a man who traveled with me once."

Dana went onto shore, to find Rosas in the now-forming camp. But he heard a voice of such complex tones that there was no getting to the bottom of it.

"Ah, it is my eldest son," the voice said. "It is my eldest son the traitor."

It was the Lady Valiente, the mother of Serafino. There also was Otis Ranker the United States man with whom Dana had once traveled. Otis had crossed the continent on foot to find a man he might serve. He'd found him now, just when that man had run to the end of his line. Serafino and Carolina were there. And Damisa the Leopard. All the old company, all in the camp of Rosas whom Dana had betrayed.

And Rosas was there. "I could pass for a younger Rosas even easier than I passed for a younger O'Higgins," Dana said to himself. Animal blue eyes locked with those others of animal-blue. The older and the younger man looked much alike, straw haired and strong.

"You are the rotted-soul Irishman who talked Urquiza into betraying me?" Rosas asked with casual harshness.

"I'm that," Dana said.

"How'd you do it?" Rosas inquired with apparent interest.

"I'm quite a talker," Dana said.

"Manolo!" Rosas ordered. A large, lithe Indian man came from off-haunch of Rosas. He struck Dana Coscuin a terrific blow in the face. "Fastest man a-hand I ever saw," Dana mused in shallow consciousness as he lay in the stomped thistles. The Indian Manolo bound Dana's hands behind his back. He bound him of foot. He ran a strong line to his foot binding, and ran the long line to the saddle-horn of his horse. He mounted horse, he lunged, and the horse lunged, and Dana was being dragged.

"Ah, my eldest son the traitor, he will be dragged to his death behind a horse," the Lady Valiente wailed in her complex voice, very complex voice. But why did she wink so solemnly and puzzlingly at Dana when he caught her eye as he rolled in the jerking drag? The Lady Valiente had confidence in this her eldest son the traitor.

Oh, it was a rough go of it as Manolo and his horse picked up surge and speed. It was rough country there. An educated man on an educated horse could stay in the clear open and drag his victim through every thorn bush and thistle trap on that plain.

An ordinary man would be dead in three quarters of a mile of it; the toughest man would be dead in a mile and a half. "To the death, Manolo, to the death!" Rosas bellowed behind them. Yes, Rosas was a very cruel man. Sometimes, in remorse, he cast

himself into thorn bushes after a deed was done, but he was always certain that the murder was absolutely consummated before he allowed himself remorse.

But Dana was now jerked and battered into full consciousness. Might as well meet death in his wits. But on the heels of full consciousness, and himself dragged by the heels, Dana had a startling realization of the thing they had forgotten, or had never known.

"Even the doltish Danes of Ireland, when they came, (and I have some of their doltish blood in myself) knew enough to break a man's thigh bones before they dragged him to his death," Dana was laughing his realization that he had it whenever he wanted it. "Are they children, these people under half a sky? Have they never know savagery itself? A man with his legs and recoil unbroke can turn anything around, anything."

Dana went with it a short way. There was something horribly luxurious in taking this exquisite death-battering. But he couldn't afford the luxury of enduring it for long.

"That's enough," he said. "It's not for myself, it's for the Indian that I have compassion. It's his turn on the way back."

It was no great trick. Once, when he was air borne in his jouncing, Dana doubled himself in a great surge. Sometimes a rope may be snapped in this manner. It wasn't. He tried it a second time and missed. But on the third attempt Dana fastened on the line with his teeth just above where it knotted to his ankle binding. Dana savaged the rope with his teeth. He was wolfish, he was tigerish with his teeth. His bounding and jouncing was the more violent on him in his doubled-up position, but it was more violent on the line also. Dana was bear-toothed, he was beaver-toothed, he was savage-human toothed. Strong men in the three-bays region of Ireland used to show their strength of jaw by biting pieces out of pine boards. A strong man toothed and rampant can sheer through a pretty good hemp line. Dana did it. The line parted.

Dana crashed and rolled violently, but he came onto his feet, standing, and only moderately broken. The Indian Manolo was circling back on his horse, having felt the breaking of the line. And Dana still stood with his hands bound behind him.

A very agile man, though, can jump backwards through the loop of his own hands. Dana did it. He fell in the close effort. He rose again with his hands in front of him and gnawing like a giant frantic rat at this wrist bonds. His forearms stood out absolutely black with the effort, and he broke the gnawed ropes. Manolo and

the horse were upon him with whip and hoof.

"Ah, the horses of this land are as childish as the men," Dana blood-mumbled out of his mouth. "Knows he not better than to over-rear with a dangerous animal under his belly?"

For the horse had over-reared when he went up with slashing hoofs, and Dana was the most dangerous animal on the pampas (the runt jaguars of that part of the continent simply weren't in it with Dana for fierceness). Dana surged powerfully into the back legs of the over-reared horse, grabbed the very fetlocks out from under him, and threw that heaving hulk of a horse onto its back.

And smashed the rider under him? Never. Manolo was better Indian than that. Manolo was onto his feet before his horse crashed to the ground, and came at Dana fast.

Something else, very fast. Dana had felled Manolo with echoing violence.

"I spoke an unwitting falsehood a bit ago," Dana told himself as he bound the stunned Indian's wrists behind him. "I said that he was the fastest man a-hand I'd ever seen. I'd forgotten about a faster man. I'm a faster man. I'd almost forgotten for a moment that I was a thunder-man."

Dana bound Manolo's ankles as his own had been bound. He knotted the line, a slightly shorter line now, to the ankle bindings, and he tied the other end of the line to the saddle horn of the skittish horse.

Then Dana raised a two-hundredweight stone above his head with intent to bring it down with all his thunderous strength. But, instead, he laughed, and tipped the giant weight off behind him.

"Nay, I'll not shatter his shanks," Dana said. "I'll give him the same chance he gave me." Dana mounted the bewildered and squealing horse. He lunged, and the horse lunged, and they dragged Manolo over a very rough seven furlongs back to Rosas.

An ordinary man would be dead in a furlong less than that. But a very tough man might have some life left in him after even a four or five furlong longer torture.

Dana completed the screaming drag (Manolo was a well-voiced Indian) with a flourish, reared up before Rosas, and leapt easy-footed to the turf.

"He'll not die of it," Dana said. "He's near as tough a man as myself. But he's broken bodied and he needs care. Rosas, are you still a child, and you having ruled so many years?"

"A child? How am I a child?" the dictator Rosas asked, but he was taken aback.

"You know not that one first breaks the *femores*, the thighbones

of a man before heel-dragging him to death?"

"No. This I hadn't known, Irishman. I've been doing the thing defectively for thirty years and nobody has instructed me better." Rosas had understood his neglect instantly, of course, and he was appalled by his own ignorance. But he'd been doing it carelessly and wrong for those thirty years, and no other man had lived through a death-drag he'd ordered.

"You are a child in other ways, Rosas," Dana said. Dana had the upper hand now, for all that he was shredded in clothing and body. "You come to defeat, Rosas," he said. "There is no way out of that. Will it be a glorious or an inglorious defeat you win for yourself?"

"It will be glorious, if it comes," Rosas said, "but I'm not convinced that I'll be defeated. I've won at ten to one against me before. But I'll go in glory if I go. I'll die hard in the battle."

"No, that's the un-glory way for you to go now, Rosas. Yes, you are still a child. I'll instruct you, and I beg that others instruct you. We must get to it now. We haven't a lot of time."

They had plenty of time, really. The day was February first. The battle of Monte Caceros wouldn't be fought for two days yet, on February third of the year 1852.

Urquiza hadn't the terrible vigor that Rosas had once had; yet that vigor of Rosas' had been a deceptive thing. It had been broken up by patches of lassitude and plain laziness, and by large areas of neglect. The areas of lassitude in Rosas had grown larger in later years, and those of preeminent vigor had grown smaller. And Urquiza had, perhaps, more vigor than any other man in the United Provinces of the Plata.

Urquiza hadn't the sometimes mad cruelty of Rosas; he detested it. But he did have a towering firmness with its own slight edge of cruelty. He was a man of the Provinces and of the mid-century.

He hadn't that which might be called the visceral intelligence of Rosas, that body feel for everything in the Provinces, the absolute rapport with its basic looseness and freedom. But Rosas himself hadn't that feel as strongly as he'd had it once. Urquiza was the more brainy man, by any conventional standard; and he also had the body feel, which Rosas lacked, for the world beyond the Provinces. He stood to Rosas something like nephew to uncle, a more sophisticated nephew to the uncle he still remembered as a mighty man of yore.

"If you knew you were to die within three days, Rosas, and if you had free choice in the matter, who would you choose for your successor?" Dana Coscuin asked him.

"Urquiza, of course, foul traitor that he is. But I don't intend to die within three days."

"I and Urquiza and others intend that you will die, as far as your connection with the United Provinces goes, within three days, Rosas. Well then, if you knew you must go into permanent exile within three days (and that is a thing which you must do), who would you choose for your successor?"

"Urquiza, of course."

"Choose him then."

"He's chosen himself. Yours, as first stated, was the better device, Irishman. It'd spoil it for me to put my seal on it. If I am taken away, then I must be (for the grand effect of it) taken away roaring and bellowing. How many good men do you think that it'd take to put me on a boat, Irishman, and me playing the bull to the very hump?"

"A dozen strong men, I suppose, Rosas; unless we ring your nose like a bull indeed, then it'd be easier. You'd never be able really to unite the United Provinces again. Something has gone out of you."

"I know it. But has that something come into anyone else?"

"Maybe into Urquiza, Rosas. He can unite the Provinces again, and defend them."

"Not completely, Irishman. They'll never be serene under strong peace again." (Rosas was correct in this. The Provinces would not be under such strong peace in the foreseeable future. But they'd be able to stave off utter disaster for decade after decade of that foreseeable future. They would join many other lands on the precarious razor's edge, and they would not be destroyed.)

"I'll not surrender to that noisome cloud of flies on the other bank," Rosas said stubbornly.

"No, you will not," Dana explained. "Our whole idea is to forestall that. The flies, the devils, the good men turned weird, have pitched their hysteria too singly on one thorn, you. We remove that thorn from the flesh. And Urquiza stands steady and in control, having conquered you and sent you into exile."

"They'll know, on the other shore, quickly that they've been robbed of their chaos and their devil's opportunity, but they'll not know it soon enough. They'll be as afraid to attack Urquiza as they were to attack you before Urquiza declared against you. And their thing will be broken for a while, and all the babble exploded out of it. They'll not be able to bring a new hysteria to such a pitch for near a decade."

"Why didn't Urquiza take it over from me five years ago when I begged him to?"

"He wasn't competent for it then, Rosas. Now he is."

"I'll think about these things, Irishman."

Dana went to the Lady Valiente and to her son's wife, Carolina, and asked them if they were able to take the *Catherine Dembinska* down river a hundred miles, out of the way.

"We can take her, eldest son," Valiente said, "but she'll not want to go. She'd like to blaze her cannons a bit in the battle here."

"She'll do none such. I'll not have that arsonist wife-ship of mine in any battle here at all. She's capable of igniting the whole thing, and me pouring cold water on it day and night."

The two ladies took the ship down river—no—it was the three ladies (one of them in timbered-flesh but still graceful form) who went down the river together.

The next morning (it was February second) Rosas stood and gazed across the river at the polyethnic armies on the other side. (There was dust in the air; Urquiza was coming, and the foreign armies would not dare cross till Urquiza had attacked Rosas.)

"Carrion birds, maggots, swarms of flies, devils' devices," Rosas was muttering. "Ah, but there are good men from Paraguay and Brazil and Uruguay there, good men (though traitors) from the United Provinces, good men even from England and France and Italy. Why do these good men make a bad army, Irishman? Why are they an intolerable evil?"

"It is an intricate business, Rosas."

"Which means that you don't know the answer, Irishman. I will tell you what is wrong: their statement is false."

"What statement is that, Rosas?"

"The statement that they make as they draw up into an army, or a mob. It is the same as the Garibaldi statement. He is another torch-head, Irishman, as you and I are, one of the passionate fair men. I believe that he is right in his person but wrong in his statement."

"I don't understand about the statement, Rosas."

"You had better understand about it, Irishman. It's a statement that is not to be believed, and you yourself will hear it again and again, at other times, in other places. Be wary of it."

That night, February second, Urquiza came (only half secretly) to talk to Rosas himself. The armies of the two men (the armies which were to fight each other on the morrow) were already mingling with each other in friendship and reminiscence of old acquaintance. They had odd customs in the United Provinces.

Urquiza stated that perhaps there need not be a battle at all. But



the moment that he said it he knew that he'd spoken wrong, for the Indians and Gauchos on each side began to wail.

"It is our last chance to die in battle, and you'd rob us of it," they complained.

"There will always be wars and battles," Dana joshed them.

"Not like this. They come with new things now, with field guns and entrenchments; we have heard of them. This is the last of the old battles, our last opportunity to die in the kind of war that we understand. This will be the last fighting of men on horses with rifles and pistols and knives and boleadoras and lariats, the last such battle as God himself loved to fight in his youth."

"I suppose that there should be some sort of battle," Rosas said.

"All right," Urquiza agreed. "We'll let them go, about three hundred men on a side, and they can find death in it who want it. It's hard on them that the old days should be gone."

"It's hard on me also," Rosas said.

"And we'll let about four hundred men (they need not be any of the same men) select themselves to ride on the retreat," Urquiza continued.

"The retreat?" Dana asked. He didn't quite understand that.

"Irishman, you arrange so much of it, and you do not understand about the retreat?" Urquiza asked in amused disgust. "When that army of obscenities breaks across from the other bank, then we must point out to them the Rosas army in full retreat, and we must set them in pursuit of it. Never mind that the men on the retreat will be three of my own men for one of Rosas'. We will say it is the Rosas army, and who of the strangers will know better. My men, and the Rosas men, can ride to Hell and back in a single day, a long journey. The mixed crowd from the other bank can't ride like that. In three days our men will have ridden the pants off the strangers. Then some of our men will turn, and there will be bloody fun here and there. You know how these things are, Irishman."

They took Rosas then to put him on the ship to go to his exile. Twelve strong men couldn't do it. It took twenty. He didn't bellow as he'd said he would, though. He fought silently and powerfully. They tied him down and strapped him down in a bunk, and the exile ship slipped down the river with him. Rosas sobbed in his throat like the broken-hearted animal he was. (This was still the early night of February second, the night before the battle when Rosas should be overthrown.)

But he'd have a second youth in England, would Rosas, in Southampton. He'd live twenty-five years more. He'd be a

gentleman-farmer and a tract-writer. For the latter thing he would discover a real talent in himself. He'd write mostly against the false statement of the Garibaldi people and others of their kind.

In the morning (of February 3, 1852) was fought the battle of Monte Caceros. It was essentially a mock battle, but it was also the last battle of the sort that the Gauchos and the Indians understood, the last one that belonged to the old days. And quite a few of these basic men accepted the last opportunity to die in old time battle.

Then the mixed armies from the other bank broke across the river and were set in pursuit of the retreating "Rosas" army. The pursuers did have the pants ridden off them in three days or less, and many of them met death when the rag-tags (deep in the wild country now) decided to turn and have some fun out of it.

The international devils, the interworld devils, had felled a strong and compromised man who had stood in their way. They had done it after years of effort and planning.

And in his place they now saw another strong man, less compromised, better supported, unassailable for some time, and standing equally in their way.

It was enough to make devils weep.

## IX

### WHERE YET VOLCANIC IS MY HOME

*"In the nervousness of the belching Volcano, and the great water-spout in the Passage, when the Fountains of the Deep are broken up and all the ancient Islands appear in the Sky, then will the World end for a while."*

—Marie Galante, Prophecy

*"The End of the World in the Cannoning Gates,  
And fountaining Sea where the Damsel will die:  
Volcano afire, and the Islands and Straits;  
Green Fire in the Ocean, Red Fire in the Sky."*

—Guadeloupe (Basse-Terre) Prophecy

What's this, what's this? There are some sheets of the life missing, and they cover at least two years of the life of Dana Coscuin. Well, surely they're in the chest there, in the child's coffin. It's junky in that chest; it should be cleaned up. But the sheets of all the years of the life ought to be there. They aren't.

No, the sheets of at least two of the years (from early 1852 to early 1854) are missing; or at least they cannot be found in that rummage now. It may be that they'll be found at a later date and be inserted then. A life need not necessarily be lived consecutively. It's mere habit.

Besides, a few scraps of those two years are known, from Damisa, from Serafino, from Otis Ranker and others. They're given here then as a scrappy abridgement:

Dana was several times in and out of Mexico in this period. There're whole memories of the Mexican adventures, but they're not at all clear. Dana was there at the time of the return of the dictator-liberator Santa Ana, the man who was so divided in himself between the Green Revolution and the Red Revolution as to be almost driven to insanity. In Mexico Dana met a deeper Religion coupled with a deeper Atheism than he had met anywhere in the further south. He had not before encountered these two strong forces in the same persons. He met also a quality that can only be called Nobility of Indians. In Peru and in Ecuador there had been some remembrance of this quality. In Chile and in the Argentine there had been some prevision of it. Only in Mexico

did Dana find it living. Dana was in Mexico with Otis Ranker and with Damisa the Leopard; and Damisa remained there to become a Black Mexican.

Dana was several times in and out of the United States in these years 'for the finishing of the man.' How could the unfinished United States provide the finishing of a man? If this phrase was composed by Scheherazade of Amsterdam (who sometimes composed lives for Dana independent of his own living them) then it was just one of those phrases that she tossed off hurriedly. After all, she was busy making up lives for everyone in the world. Angelene of Basse-Terre was also busy at weaving a life for Dana that was not in complete accord with his actual life. Dana the man would never be finished.

In New Orleans, Dana mingled in the high life with Lady Valiente and her son Serafino and her son's wife Carolina. He also mingled in the low life with the destitute Irish who had come to this city in uncommon numbers from the long famine at home.

Dana made an extensive trip up the Mississippi and Missouri rivers (*not on the Catherine Dembinska*), mostly in the company of the poor Irish who were looking for homes or employment.

Dana was out of pocket all the coin he had for them on this trip, and he groaned for Count Cyril to come to his aid with more. The Count, for once, was deaf to him. Dana went up the Missouri as far as Kaneshville (now named Council Bluffs); Otis Ranker was with him on at least part of this trip. Otis washed gold dust out of the muddy Missouri to pay for further passage of some of the poor people. Actually he didn't; he already had the gold dust, he pretended to wash it out of the muddy river. Otis went back to Mexico later, once with Dana, once without him.

Dana did not return to Basse-Terre during this two year period, not till early 1854. The details of all that he did do are not meant to be given. Every man of note will have had seven hidden years in his life, for the *real* finishing of the man; he'll not become a man of note without them. But these years need not all be in one piece. Dana'd had at least one such year (in foreign parts and ports) before his summons to leave Bantry Bay for Hendaye to begin his public adventures. He'd have other such years in the years to come. He himself would never reveal any of the doings of his hidden years, and nobody else should. In old Burton it is given that men inquired what was in a certain covered box. 'It is covered that you may not know what is in it,' they were told.

Dana came home to Basse-Terre in the early part of the year 1854. He came now in the *Catherine Dembinska*. With him were not only

the Lady Valiente with Serafino and Carolina, but also (unaccountably) the English Lady Elaine Kingsberry, and the Basse-Terre man named Charley Oceaan. When had Charley left Basse-Terre, and when had he joined Dana? That isn't to be given either; it was also one of the hidden things of the hidden years. The *Catherine Dembinska* arrived home (but how could it have been home? She had never been there before) from a United States port.

She'd not been there before? Then why had there been, for many decades, a shoal in the passage between Guadeloupe and Marie-Galante Island that was named The Grave of *Caterina Dama Binación*? This, if it could be interpreted at all, might mean The Grave of the Catherine the Lady of the Double Feast or the Double Mass. But it also sounded, if the ear caught it just right, mighty like The Grave of Catherine Dembinska.

All the people of Basse-Terre seemed to be gathered at the little docks to greet them. That wasn't strange. Often they'd gather to greet any boat whatsoever, and just as likely were they to pay no attention at all to an arrival—out of a happy group malice. What was strange was that they had fabricated welcoming signs, and signs with something even stranger on them. There was no telegraph on Basse-Terre, no way that the news of the arrival could have reached there. But not only did the people whoop out “B'envenu,” and beat drums and toot horns for all that party coming home, and sing and chant; but they also had posters or signs carrying the words of their chant. There was even a linen weaving with the words picked out on it, the words that were as constant as they were curious:

“*Hourra po'r llez nocés d'dana*—Hurrah for the nuptials of Dana.” And there was another sign lettered in English “All welcome to Dana Cosquin and his happy marriage.”

(The people of Basse-Terre had always misspelled the surname of Dana Cosquin, had done so for more than a hundred years. It's as though they didn't know there was no *q* in Irish.)

“My eldest son is getting married, and he hasn't told me,” Lady Valiente said slyly. “Surely he should have told his new mother about his new bride.”

“Whom do you marry, Dana?” Elaine Kingsberry asked anxiously. What she was really asking under her words was “Will it be myself?” There may have been a little something going on between Dana and Elaine recently.

“I'm as much stranger to this as anybody,” Dana grinned his puzzlement. “None has asked me to marry her, and I've asked none to marry me. Can *nocés* mean anything besides nuptials?”

"Oh, it can mean a spree," Lady Valiente laughed. "But should not every marriage also be a spree?"

"It can mean walnuts in the patois," Charley Oceaan offered helpfully but not hopefully. "But they are not calling 'Hurrah for the walnuts'."

"And they also use the words *mariage* and *boda*," said Serafino Tirana. "And some of them shout 'Wedding' in English, and the priest cries '*bainis*' in Irish. No, they are not cheering for walnuts, but let us hope they are cheering partly at least for a spree."

"Dana might not marry at all," Carolina put in monkeyishly. "I do not remember giving my approval. I have not approved any wife for him yet. Serafino has not. And the *Catherine* has not."

But there was a sudden pleasant sounding in the rigging, like rats romping, like breeze blowing over strings; like no other sound than that of the *Catherine* herself. And always someone was able to interpret Catherine's message.

"'Who says that I have not approved?'—that is what the *Catherine* says," Carolina interpreted. "Ah, the tricky skiff! She's known all about it, and never told me once. She's a sly minded ship not to have told me. I always tell her everything."

Then they all tumbled off the sly minded ship with some parts of their baggage. It was good for them to be home, even for those who had never been to this home before.

The priest, that puny man of all the seven bloods of Basse-Terre (though Dana had not noticed before that the Irish predominated in him), spoke to Dana first and clasped him.

"You are in grace again," he said, "and I am happy for you. I've been in the worry about you for several years. I know it's a strong and joyous and happy marriage you'll have, though I foresee long separations (though never divisions) in it. It will be in two days time."

"Grace to you also, *Monsieur l'abbé*, padre, sagart," Dana said. "Coming home is itself like a benediction, though I don't understand how it's become so strongly my home. One other thing I don't understand! They say in Ireland, when you have a question in a strange land (or a strange home), ask the priest. Whom am I to marry?"

"Why, Dana Coscuin will marry the Bride of Dana Coscuin, of course."

Then Dana remembered with a laugh.

The sous-sous governor Guerchin also greeted Dana warmly.

"You are a blessing to the land and to the eyes of the land," he said. "And know you one thing. Thanks to the influence of your own great friend and protector, I am not the contemptible sous-

sous governor any longer. I have been restored to my rightful office of sous-governor."

"Had I a great friend and protector here?" Dana asked.

"This is true. He was here," said a man who on Dana's previous stay on Basse-Terre had bowed to Dana repeatedly but had never spoken to him. "The Count was here at his own estate for more than two weeks. He has left a month since, but he said that Dana Cosquin would be here, and that we should open the gates of both the island and the estate to him, for both of them are his home."

"The Count? You are saying the Count Cyril?" Dana asked. (The man who had just spoken to him was steward of the estate named Greenfields.) "Greenfields is the estate of Count Cyril?"

"One of the estates of the great man," the steward said, "one of his favorite estates. It is ready, for you, or for as many guests as you wish to bring there."

"Dana wishes to go and dwell in that rocky cairn that is named the House of Dana Cosquin," Carolina said. "Never mind how I know about it, I know. It is more builded now that it was when he was here before. He will dine and revel at Greenfields, but he will live in the House of Dana."

"We ourselves will live in Greenfields for as long as we are here," the Lady Valiente said. "Myself, and my son Serafino, and my son's wife Carolina. We ourselves are all kindred of the Count Cyril Prasinos, and he'd welcome us there."

"He's done so," the steward said. "You three he mentioned by name as coming also."

"The Count, what does he look like?" Dana asked. "I've never seen him."

"You passed as the double of Bernardo O'Higgins once," Lady Valiente said. "You could have passed as a younger double of Rosas had Rosas not been still strongly in evidence. You could pass as a double of the Count Cyril, as he was thirty years ago (or perhaps three hundred years ago). Have you never been taken for him, Dana?"

"I have, yes. But I've never seen him. It seems that I never shall."

"It is said here that it isn't right for a man to meet his other person," Charley Oceaan contributed. "One of them must die then, or go away."

"We're not each's other person in that meaning," Dana said, "though it's true that I've been mistaken for him, or taken for him anyhow."

The Count Cyril had been a haunt to Dana, but a pleasant and fatherly (or avuncular) haunt. "Just what is your kinship with the Count Cyril?" Dana asked the Lady Valiente.

"I am the third cousin of him," she said. "There's an oddity about that, though. My mother was also third cousin to him, as was my grandmother and great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother. I believe, in fact, that the direct relationship goes back quite a few generations further than that. The Count has the gift for making himself contemporary with each generation and he's done it for a long, long time. Thus my sons Brunone and Serafino are also third cousins to the Count Cyril, direct and not removed."

"You, Valiente, have the gift of making yourself contemporary with every generation of legend, which is what I call this benevolent lie of yours," Dana accused. "You generate legends yourself, and you are the mother and grandmother of them. I'd not be surprised if you yourself were three hundred years old or even older."

"Do I look three hundred years old, Dana my newest and eldest son?" Valiente asked.

"Sometimes you do, Valiente. There's an ancient and spectral quality in your eyes."

"Ah, but I'm still solid enough in my flesh," she said, and she hugged Dana in a scandalous and near bone-crushing way. Where did small Valiente get her large strength? "You're still a boy to me, my eldest son, and I'm still too young to be your blood mother for all the three hundred years in my eyes."

"But I am of an even closer kinship to the Count Cyril," Carolina said with merry solemnity, "for I am niece direct. He is brother of my own mother, and of my mother's mother, and of my mother's mother's mother, and of—"

"Be off with the pack of you," Dana scoffed. "A man'll not rebirth himself like that."

"What he does, Dana," Serafino explained, "is renew himself every generation, every thirty years and three months. He sheds his skin like a serpent at these times, and he sheds the thirty years and three months each time he does it. Thus he returns again and again to the ideal full age of man which is thirty years and three —"

"Quiet, you barking pup," Dana howled. "I'm but three days short of the period myself. Stand, and you may see myself do the wonder. Ye should all three of ye be Irish with the crookie tongues ye have in your heads."

"It is a fact that the three of us do all have Irish blood," Valiente said, "as has the Count. We are all of the seven bloods, as are the good people of Basse-Terre, but not of the same seven. All good persons everywhere have approximately this one seventh Irish



blood. To have more than that becomes a little bit bad mannered. To have very much more than that becomes—what is the word for it—”

“Danesque,” Carolina supplied.

Dana took only his sea-bag and the child's coffin to the place that was called The House of Dana Cosquin. Celeste, the bright belle of Dana and of Basse-Terre, carried the coffin (which was some days very heavy and some days very light, and from her handling of it one could not guess which it was today) on her head up the paths with Dana.

“Is this bright and shining one the bride?” Elaine Kingsberry asked with pleasant hurt.

“No, I am only the belle and the bridesmaid,” Celeste laughed. “Oh, you the English lady, in your eyes, in your eyes, the jealousy.”

“Oh, it's that too,” Elaine admitted, “but it's more than that. It's the *mystery*. *Who* is the *bride*?”

“She is herself,” said Celeste. “How else can you name the bride except Bride?”

Celeste set the child's coffin down in the house of Dana Cosquin. And then she left Dana. The belle may only trespass so far.

The house had been building considerably since Dana had last seen it. A very great area had been flagged over and floored with flat stones set in volcanic mortar. Several rooms, including one very large and high room, had been walled and roofed. Dana took up residence in this very large room. It had table and chairs of bay-laurel or noble-laurel wood, fine hewn and rippled and the floor was carpeted with green bay leaf. There was a big bay-wood bed filled up with fronds and island moss, and decked with fine-woven sheet and cover with a green-colored field and crested-gold design. The whole was very aromatic.

There was a single setting on the table, just laid, but there was nobody around. The setting was a platterful of hot goat meat in a mix of lens shaped seeds that were cousin to the lentil, and permeated with the essence and aroma of another plant that was said to be a species of mandragora.

“I have come this way before, with the mandragora,” Dana said. “Someone, I believe, fed that to me on my first day on this island. It induces erotic afternoon dreaming in one, and now it is only morning.”

But Dana ate it all. It was, as he understood it to be, a ritual meal. The ritual of it he didn't understand yet, but it was a formal and studied thing.

Then Dana wandered about on foot for several hours. It was an

erotic sort of travel lust that the ritual meal gave Dana, a not quite clean avidity to see new things, or to follow ordained things past their limits. Dana went up the volcano on whose southwestern flank his own house was abuilding. He went as far as he should go, and a little further; he went to the top, but not to the part of the top where it opened. Something inhibited him from completely exploring the fiery and chaotic pate of this smoking mountain-uncle of his.

Dana went down by the Great Thermal Springs which are hard south of the volcano. He knew that, for two more days yet, this was forbidden territory to him. He did not come absolutely to these Springs, though he yearned to do it. Something again inhibited him. He was looking for the Spirit of the Island, but he knew that he must not encounter that spirit prematurely.

Dana then went very near to that hewn cavern which is named The Grave of Dana Cosquin. This was on the southeastern flank of the volcano. Dana came through brush to, and a little below, the mouth of the Grave. He didn't come near enough to see into its depth, though. Now he was looking for the Spirit of Self, and he knew that he hadn't the right to find it yet. Inside the Grave (which was actually a horizontal cave going back into the rock), there was said to be a low-relief depictment (either natural or carved) of the face of the man who would lie there. Dana was both avid and afraid to see that face, to discover whether it was indeed his own face, to know if or not he was only a masquerade Dana or the true Dana of the island. He wished also, but with considerable trepidity, roughly to ascertain from that face what would be the age of that man when he was laid there.

No, he wasn't to see it, he wasn't to find out. He would finally see the inside of that grave only with dead man's eyes.

Dana nooned and afternooned with Charley Ocean and his friends. It was pleasant to be back with the real bucks, with the strong and earth-growing men. He late-afternooned with Elaine Kingsberry and with Celeste the belle, with whom Elaine was staying. Elaine had been feeding her curiosity with many facts and half-facts that the merry Celeste gave her, and now she had a more lowering curiosity than ever.

"Dana," she asked, "this girl or woman you are to marry, is she not—?"

"Is she not the Spirit of the Island, Elaine? Certainly. She is the green Spirit of the Island, she is the earth eruption."

"No. I mean, is she not—how shall I say it with my own insular and straited mind?—is she not—?"

"Is she not of all seven of the bloods of Basse-Terre, Elaine? Yes,

she is of my blood, and of thine, and of all the others. How else would she be green Spirit of the Island?"

"Are you sure that you know what you're doing, Dana?"

"No. Of course I don't know what I'm doing till I do it. I'll do what I'm ordained to do. Why should I fail it?"

"Well, Dana, do not tell me again that you are ordained to do something by a cloud-castled Count, or by a mad God's-girl in Amsterdam, or by a fate-weaving woman of this very island. You are fog-headed, Dana. You must make your own life."

"I'll not believe that, Elaine. I'll make it, yes, out of such pieces as are provided to me, and the gimcrackery of some of those pieces rocks me back a little. I will make it with strange instruments that are wielded in me by clownish and extravagant persons who in their turn are manipulated by (it isn't really blasphemous to use such words, Elaine) a merry and clownish God. Should God be sober and serious always? Who is able to command that He be? He too must have His fun, and some of it He has with Dana Coscuin.

"Besides, Elaine, when I do make my own life, I set it beside the one already made for me by outrageous hands, and I find the two to be substantially the same. And then they merge. It's always been in those lines with me."

And, just at quick dark, they all (everyone that you know on Basse-Terre, many that you don't know, about fifty persons in all) arrived at Greenfields to dine in splendor by the grace of the absent Count Cyril and that of his kinsmen and kinswomen, and the stewarts; and those good local people themselves who had taken on the estate three kids, three lambs, a colt, a calf, and slaughtered and roasted them for the dinner which the Count himself approved in his absence.

What high things happened there that night can't be given here. They have a vanishing quality. They are remembered forever in pleasure, but they're disremembered in detail. It was happy spirit of the island in all the eating and drinking and talking and green glitter. And the Spirit of the Island was there herself literally, and might be seen by all eyes but those of Dana.

"Look away, look away!" they'd all warn Dana when the Spirit of the Island came into any room where he might be. He was not allowed to see her at all till second morning from then. The people would hold up sheets or curtains to block out his sight of her. They'd put their fingers in his ears to block off her voice (he wasn't supposed to hear that either). Even Elaine Kingsberry who had been eating her own heart a little (and finding it of a somewhat happy and pleasant taste) joined in these games. Finally Celeste put blindfold on Dana, and Carolina filled his ears

full of moss. He couldn't see the bodied Spirit, he couldn't hear her, but with other senses he enjoyed her.

They had a grand dinner and a fine half-night of it. There could not have been more gracious or memorable entertainment if the Count Cyril himself had been there present at Greenfields.

And just at half-night, at midnight, Dana returned to his own house abuilding and went to bed in the bay-bed. It was the first night he had slept at home anywhere for those five years and it was all brimming peace till that black hour just before false dawn.

Ifreann came to him then, out of the flesh in all likelihood (Dana refused to open his eyes to see, and even seeing wouldn't be to know), and harassed Dana and himself with imagined and utterly foolish worries and deliriums.

"I have to know about the child's bones in the little coffin, Dana," Ifreann said with an almost gentleness that could hardly be covered by the natural rank harshness of his voice. "Of whose issue are they, Dana, yours or mine?"

"There's no sense in your question or in you," Dana said sleepily. "How could they be of anyone's issue? But I'm knowing little about them, Ifreann. Sometimes there are a few little bones mixed with other junk in the coffin. And sometimes they're not to be found there at all. I don't know what they are." Dana was speaking honestly out of his sleep.

"They're the bones of Catherine's son," Ifreann said.

"Catherine had no son."

"No son born. But she did have a son, and those are some of his bones. Who fathered them, Dana?"

"Who but myself, Ifreann? Nobody else ever had her. If there had been issue, and there wasn't, he'd be mine."

"I lusted for Catherine in life and I raped her in death," Ifreann was saying heavily. "I believe that the bones are those of my son and not of yours. How would a man of the common sort engender loose bones in a little chest?"

"Get out of my head, get out of my house, get out of my dream, Ifreann, or I'll kill you finally, be you *fantôme* or real."

"You cannot, Dana, not at this time. I cannot be touched by you. As to the bones, there is a test. There is one bone which ourselves and most animals have and which men do not have. This is the os *penis*. Is it ever to be found among the bones in the chest?"

"Foul fiend take you, Ifreann, save that you're already one and among them. I wouldn't know the os *penis* if I saw it. I begin to wake up now, and I'll set my hand to kill you at once."

"I tell you that you cannot, Dana, not at this time. But you *will*

know the bone if you see it. It'll affect you strangely. Wake at once and look. I can only see into the chest with your eyes. I must know whether the bones are of my son or of yours."

Dana woke in a fury. He put hand to knife and to pistol. He howled out his hate of this Son of the Devil and of all devils. He shot the pistol three times at shadows. They could not have been anything else; there was nothing but shadows there. He gashed and lashed with the hand knife. But Ifreann was *fantôme* and not flesh, and he had already vanished away.

Several wakeful-eared men came from different directions to see what the night shooting was about. But they were, each one of them, intercepted and sent back on their way by Angelene Domdaniel. She explained to them that it was a private passion of Dana's and that he must not be disturbed in it.

When clear dawn came, Dana did open the chest and look at the small bones that were in it. They were very small this morning, as small as mouse bones. There was no doubt that they were the bones of an unborn child. They were gathered all together now and not mingled with the other junk in the coffin as they usually were.

There was a skull almost complete. It wasn't a pumpkin-shaped skull like that of Ifreann, not even in miniature. There were half the ribs. There was a wrist bone so small that even Dana with his fine eyes had trouble identifying it. There was one tibia only there; it was the longest of all the bones, but it wasn't complete. Not very many bone remnants (or bone intuitions, if they were that) but there were more of the small pieces than there had ever been before.

There was no os penis among them. That was the test. Devils and most animals have this bone; humans haven't. Ifreann himself had said that Dana would know the bone if it were there. It wasn't.

Dana was impelled, however (possibly by Ifreann who could see into the chest only through Dana's eyes), to turn through all the other items in the coffin. There were papers quite new, quite impossible of normal appearance in the coffin; there were clippings from the foreign press ('twould have to be from a foreign press; there was no press on Basse-Terre); there were letters, some of them from and to persons that Dana didn't know at all; there was a piece on the Green Revolution by a Scotchman (he didn't mean the same thing by the Green Revolution as Catherine had meant, as Brume and others had meant); there were some small (almost microscopic) sea-shells of the kind that are called triton-shells; there were French cartoons. There were

several Dutch gold coins. There was a Mexican scored dollar or piece-of-eight. There weren't any other bones.

Dana closed the coffin and pushed it away from him. He exploded out of his dazed frustration. He'd been compelled to make this examination by another. Now he stood in pale anger and anguish, in quaking horror before the hint of Ifreann's suggestion. There was a dirtiness forever in everything that Ifreann had touched, but he had not touched Catherine that way, not in life. This was the one thing that could not have been, the thing that must not even be considered.

Twenty-four hours later, Dana Coscuin was married to—to the Bride of Dana Cosquin, of course; to the Green Spirit of the Island. They were married before God and before all the good people of Basse-Terre Town. Then Dana and his Bride went for one full week down to the Great Thermal Springs and lived in a house there.

They were not disturbed at all by anyone that week. All the people from high to low had been warned by Dana and by the Bride to let them alone for their own moon-quarter. And every person on Basse-Terre had the good sense to be afraid of both Dana and his Bride when they should be riled. This week was important to the world as well as to the two persons involved. It contained the event and covenant of a renewed thing for the world.

At the end of this week, Dana and Angelene left the Great Thermal Springs and moved into the House of Dana Cosquin. They were at home to everybody there from that time on. They entertained royally and boisterously. There was an ease and openness about everything now. There had never been anything that could go wrong with it. It had always been made that Dana Coscuin should join this Angelene Domdaniel.

Now Dana compared the accomplished fact of it with the thing as previously made up by transcending hands: those of Count Cyril, perhaps; those of Scheherazade of Amsterdam; those of the fate-weaving Angelene Domdaniel herself. Dana found the two versions to be substantially the same. And then they merged.

A week later (it had been a busy and burgeoning week for everybody), Charley Oceaan came to the happy place of Dana and Angelene with a trace of worry.

"There is this difficulty, Dana and Angelene," he said. "I look at the future through a distorted glass, I suppose; but that future, as it touches you, seems to be shattered into two pieces. In the one piece I see Dana as carrying on the noble business of being

married to Angelene Domdaniel here, of founding a family and home and small nation. But I also see clearly that myself and several others will go to Europe in exactly six weeks, and that Dana will be with us, completely with us. Both these futures can't be."

"Look again, Charley," Dana jibed, "and you'll see Angelene in the party also. A Nation and a Family and a Home can be founded as well on sea as on land, as well in movement as in station. Shall we not do it that way, Angelene? There are adventures still unventured, and should we grow roots here?"

"I'm already rooted here, Dana," Angelene said quietly. "I will never leave this island. Yes, Charley, the future, as it touches us, is shattered into two pieces. I'll be a decade getting them together again. God is a little jealous of us, I believe, or else He has a very strange compassion on us: He doesn't want us to burn each other up. Will it be the same after a decade, do you think, Dana?"

"Decade be damned!" Dana swore. "I'll not be leaving while you are here, Angelene. None but yourself could ever send me away. You and I will never be separated again."

"Oh yes, Dana. A messenger will come to you with messenger eyes and say 'Go to Carloforte'; and you'll leave me and go."

"I'll not go for any messenger man in the world."

"What if for a messenger woman?"

"No, no. I'll not go again at the bidding of any messenger with those weird eyes. None but yourself could ever send me away, Angelene. There's building that needs to be done here also. It needs a center. This'll be the vagrant Rome of the whole green movement. I'll not listen to a word from either of you now. I'll go talk with others who are more in their wits today: with the Stallion, with the Lady Valiente, with Serafino, with three new foreigners who have come here from three different lands. We will work these things out here. I have much to offer the movement, but I offer it here. There'll not be any division at all among us."

Dana went off to talk to the Stallion, to Valiente, to Serafino and Carolina, to some rather intelligent travelers, to others. And Angelene took the opportunity to explain to Charley Ocean just what the Future would be, who would be the messenger to order Dana away, and what would be the outcome of it.

"Angelene," Dana said to his bride another week later, "I'd not told you about the small bones in the casket, but I was sure that you'd know about them without the telling, just as you know about everything else. They're gone. You've not thrown them out, have

you?"

"Thrown them out, and they so strange and priceless? Of course not, Dana. I've not thrown them out; I've taken them in."

"Taken them in? Angelene, where are those bones?"

"Dana, are you eyeless and earless and heartless and brainless, all of them? Don't you know anything at all?"

"Answer me, you changeling bride. Where are they?"

"In my belly, of course."

There are some things too wondrous for anything except laughter. The explanation had its own wit and logic, and it was quite true. They'd been ghost bones all the while, and the most ghostly thing that can happen to a body is a pregnancy. Certainly Angelene had taken the bones in, and they grown a thousand times smaller than they'd ever been before. The most natural thing in the world it was, and there had been collusion, cahoots, here. "The most natural thing in the world is that the world should be a bit above the natural," Catherine had said on the last morning of her life those more than five years ago. But it was all moment and no years for Catherine now, that supernal clown.

"Thou Purgatorial Bark," Dana called out of his laughing, "thou'st known of this coming all the time. But does that not carry the accord of the two of you to great lengths? And you, Angelene, are yourself a holy clown. But who thought of it, and who suspended the laws for it?"

Anyhow, Angelene Domdaniel Coscuin was fruitful now, and Dana knew that it was his own issue. A little extra ghostliness at the beginning will do a child no harm.

"Angelene," Dana said some time later, "there were also certain French cartoons and texts of a horny sort in the box. I've been meaning to give them a better look. Where've you put them, my girl?"

"In my belly also," Angelene grinned. "The boy needs something to read and to look at during his long wait. I remember my own months in my mother. 'Fire and Fountains!' I swore, 'I wish I had a little something to read and to look at in this close place, anything to pass the time with.' Besides, Dana, those things are a little more lewd than what I'd allow yourself to peruse. But the boy enjoys them."

Angelene herself had been born with salt and sulphur on her tongue, and she couldn't lie without grinning. She'd taken the frenchy things herself to enjoy them, but she'd not allow her good man to have anything like that.

Information of things current in the larger world Dana had in



these pleasant days from three foreign visitors on Basse-Terre, and from Elaine Kingsberry and the Lady Valiente and Serafino and Carolina also. These people had always been current, or they quickly got current again from the mail packets.

"The Devil has been stealing all the thunder," one of the three foreign visitors told Dana. "He has assembled twelve disciples of the scribbling sort and has them all working for him. They are adept at their trade; some of them have intellect; all of them have strong person in their writings. They are much better at their job and of a much more single-minded devotion than were those flies of Montevideo whom you knew. These men have an urbanity and plausibility, a poetry, almost a sweetness so as to deceive all but the elect. Some of them seem good men, but all are in his employ, wittingly or unwittingly."

"Who are they?" Dana asked. "I'll be warned by your naming them. I'm a gullible sort and am likely to be taken in otherwise, by their urbanity and plausibility, by their poetry, and their almost sweetness. I'm easily taken sometimes."

"The twelve Devil's Disciples are Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, Comte, John Stuart Mill, Friedrich David Strauss, Marx, Kierkegaard, Haeckel, Fechner, Fichte, Renan, Sainte-Beuve. You'll swear that some of them are not bad. I tell you, Irishman, they'd all be bad for you. Never before were there twelve such living and writing at once."

"Kemper knew of them a little," Dana said. "He was carried away by the bookishness."

"But how was the Devil able to recruit all of them out from under the very nose of God?" the foreign visitor asked in wonder. "And how have they become of such influence? Has nobody been watching? Has none called '*Custos, quid de nocte*? Watchman, how goes the night?' The night is going well, Irishman, for those of the night-nation."

"It is possible that God the Holy Ghost will come up with something," Dana said. "He rallies, now and then, when it seems that He's soundly whipped."

"To set against these," the foreign man said, "the Holy Spirit raises up naught but a few saints (some will be of the canon, and some otherwise). Only saints, Irishman, most of them simple, some of them ignorant (I except the luminous ignorance of the Curé d'Ars as a special thing; I have met him). Ah, let's make a dozen of these also: Anne Taigi, John Bosco, Catherine Labouré, Joseph Cottolengo, John Vianney (the Curé d'Ars of whom I spoke), Bernadette Soubirous (how have I her name? she's but a young girl yet), Monsignor Bonnard, Senestrey of Ratisbon, Henry

Manning, Father Cafasso, Leon Dupont, Frederic Ozanam. These are not the high saints such as other centuries have had. They are barely saints at all, and most will never be recognized as such. We need more. Are you a saint, Irishman?"

"Not I," Dana said. "I've a lot of fire to pass through before I'll be getting to the other side at all."

"I neither," the man said. "But we need men of every sort. It is necessary that you go to Europe with us very soon. We'll need five hundred sound persons scattered here and there to stay with it at all in the battle with the principality. We'll need you."

"Are you the messenger come to me with messenger eyes?" Dana asked. "I'll not go."

Dana also became somewhat current on the political things of the world. Here also the Devil seemed to be acquiring advantage.

Information of things more earthly and violent Dana had from the Stallion. He went to his old friend often. There was earth strength and knowledge to be got from merely mounting the noble beast. "There are things more rampant than myself that you'll have to break and ride," the Stallion told Dana (not in words), and Dana got inklings of the fearsome businesses ahead.

Information of things maritime Dana had from newly arrived seamen. There was one startling piece of news. A huge purplish man was sailing and steaming with a crew of horribly silent men (they'd all had their tongues cut out), coming in a medium-large iron-clad with cannons gleaming. This was a demented man, they said, and his like hadn't been seen around there before.

But his like *had* been seen around there before. This was Ifreann Chortovitch coming home (Basse-Terre was Ifreann's home as well as Dana's), and now there'd be a tune to be danced and a devil to pay.

"I like that touch about the horribly silent crewmen with their tongues cut out," Dana said. "Ifreann always had the coarse touch."

The weeks had rolled by. Dana had refused to go with his friends to Europe, for all that every one of them swore that he was essential.

"I'll not be ordered to go by any messenger this time," Dana insisted. "Nobody could command me away from here except Angelene herself, and she'd rather command her own soul away."

The party of voyagers had gone by jolly-boat to Grand-Bourg on Marie-Galante Island where there would soon be an ocean ship. The party was made up of the three new foreign men on Basse-Terre, and Lady Valiente and Serafino and Carolina, and Elaine

Kingsberry, and Charley Oceaan. Charley had wished all of them to go in the *Catherine Dembinska* which was still seaworthy for Europe or anywhere else.

"No. *Catherine* is a Purgatorial Bark and she'll have her release here, soon," Dana said. Now they were all gone away from him and Dana was disconsolate. He hadn't any liking to be left out of things, but he had puzzling things still undone here. Besides, he hadn't been properly asked. No messenger had come to him with those weird messenger eyes. He'd have refused to go, but he'd been expecting the opportunity of refusing. Was he no longer worth a special messenger?

Dana was returning to the House of Dana Cosquin and Angelene, still able to keep the jolly-boat in sight from the high ground. Then he lost it. He was alone. It all saddened him. Then there was the stroke.

At first Dana believed that he had suffered body stroke, that he was afflicted. Garish red and green wheels danced before his eyes. The sun had gone wrong (it was mid-afternoon) and there was blood in the air; Dana believed, for an instant, that it was spume from his own lungs. And the ground lurched under him.

It was an exterior stroke, though, it was earthquake. The ground lurched for but a moment, and it was only the weaker trees that crashed. The volcano coughed and growled like a bear and reared itself warily. Out at sea, there was the beginning of a spouting, as if there were ten thousand whales blowing at once on the whole water as far as the horizon. It was a nervous three seconds. It was repeated several times at two or three minute intervals. (This was either March 13th or 14th of the year 1854, likely it was the 14th; the first shocks had been on the thirteenth, but they may have passed without much notice; the severe shocks were of the afternoon and evening and night of March 14th.)

Dana felt a certain nervous glee in it now that he knew it. It was one of nature's aberrations that he hadn't met before, and he meant to meet them all before he was finished.

"Angelene, Angelene!" he called. "Come out and feel the great thing. It's the ground itself in turmoil!" He had come quite near to the House of Dana now.

"Have I lived here forever and not felt the *Tremblement* before?" she called gaily. (She wasn't in the House; she was on a knoll above Dana, and with her hair streaming.) "I was born during earthquake," she called, "and I'll die during one (not this one). Come hide in me if you're afraid of it, brave Dana."

"I afraid of it? I'll roll you in the rocks for that, woman. I'm afraid of nothing."

It quaked again, and they ran towards each other whooping and laughing over the pitching ground. It was as pleasant a thing as a tempest at sea.

Then Angelene froze in mid-motion. And Dana shivered in new fright as he came up to her, quietly now. This was Angelene gone strange, and how could she ever be strange to him? She stood rigid with eyes closed. Then she opened her eyes with a start. She was still Angelene, but she hadn't Angelene's eyes.

Hers were the weird eyes that Dana had seen before on several different persons, the same eyes on the very different persons. Angelene herself was the messenger with messenger eyes. She was in transport and didn't know what she was doing.

"Go to Carloforte," she said. Then she collapsed on the ground. Dana regarded her strangely and thoughtfully, but he didn't go to her. He'd wait till she came back. She opened her eyes again; she was Angelene again. But she knew what she'd said.

"All right," Dana answered the message. "I'll go to Carloforte almost at once, this very night at least. I'll first dispose of the *Catherine*. In doing this I'll have another encounter. If I live it through, I'll go to Carloforte."

"Bury the *Catherine Dembinska* in the Grave of *Catarina Dama Binación*," Angelene said, "and then go." She had risen from the ground now. Her face was dirty.

"I go to do it," Dana said dully, and he started down the paths to Basse-Terre Town where the Purgatorial Bark, the *Catherine*, was at sea anchor. When he was fifty yards away, he turned with a pang. He raised his hand to Angelene.

"In five years, or ten," he called, "I'll come back."

"I'll wait," she said. He went on down to the town. There was further quaking, and nervousness on land and sea.

There was a nervousness in the people of the town and landing also. Their faces seemed blue and green from the queer light, and they were quite apprehensive. The air was unearthly, unairy, and a little stifling. What breeze blew was almost hot. There was dust in the air and it seemed to have been carried in over the ocean. There was also light powder of falling ash, almost too fine to be seen, from the volcano Soufriere; almost too fine to be seen as it fell, but it covered and caked everything.

"Will you take me out to my ship, the *Catherine*, in your boat?" Dana asked a man on the dock.

"I'll go with you," said another man there, a man named Jack. "I'd wanted to go with you once before."

"There'll be a great wave or waves," the man with the boat said. "There'll be water-spouts and currents. These things have

happened here before. Your ship rides loose on sea anchor now and is almost as safe as she can be. I wish there were some way that the town could ride loose on sea anchor. You have a high bobbling ship that will be hard to sink, but you've left small sails on her all these weeks. Will you strip and reef her clean then and leave her to ride it out?"

"No, I'll set her under full sail," Dana told the man. "If she be hard to sink, then I'll sink her hard. She'll have her release tonight."

"I'll go with you," said the man named Jack.

"You mean to sink her?" the man who owned the boat asked.

"I'll take you to your ship, but I believe we'd better take six or seven men along with us. One man can hardly manage her, even to sink her, and a man shouldn't be without company in an uneasiness like this evening's."

"Come all the men who wish with me," Dana said. "They can help me to coal her and fire her and hoist sail. Then they can leave in the two ship's boats. They can have the ship's boats for their labor."

Seven men, besides the owner of the boat, came along with Dana to the *Catherine*. The man with the boat went back to Basse-Terre landing then. The other men said they would take the ship's boats back, except one man who said he'd stay.

"I've always wanted to ride a ship before a high wind to her sinking," this man said. "There'll be a sort of glory to it that I've never had." This man, an island man who was also a high-seas man, a fellow just past youth, was named Jack Galopade.

"It'll be a dangerous thing," Dana said, "and I never loved danger for the sake of danger. I'm not doing this for vaunt or show or madness. It's a ritual I have to perform."

They were coaling and firing the *Catherine*; they were hoisting sails that filled briskly for all that there seemed no more than a shambling breeze; they had already wound in the sea anchor, and they were moving and flowing.

"I love ritual myself," this man Jack Galopade told Dana, "and tonight I believe there'll be some fun after the ritual. And I do love danger for the sake of danger. I'll promise not to endanger either myself or yourself on this incursion, though. I'll save you rather. I'll make an absolute promise to preserve your life. If we are in the water, and if I guess your intent there is no way we will not be, then I let you know that I am younger brother of the whale. I've even a blow-hole in the top of my head to prove it."

"You've a hole in your head where your brains should be if you go with me tonight," Dana said, "but I welcome you with more

heartiness than I knew I had left. I've known you only a little but I've liked you a lot."

They talked in English, though the other six men on ship knew only Island French. Jack Galopade was of one of the island families who knew English. English was common there, the second tongue, after French, and just before Spanish. This man Jack was a life-long friend of Charley Oceaan. He'd been a several-weeks friend of Dana. Dana had also known him slightly on his previous stay on Basse-Terre. Jack was one of the men who had brought the succeeding stallion that time, the son-stallion. He'd been the man who looked yearningly as though he'd like to try the animal himself.

The breeze had stiffened. The sun was green and blue and scarlet, all at once, as it went down. The six men took the two ship's boats off and oared for shore. They'd not make Basse-Terre landing; they'd go into a cove several miles east of that. It was quick and nervous dark on them before they'd gone far, and they didn't like it.

Dana and Jack went down to the boilers and scuttled further coal into them until they roared. The engine and the smaller donkey-engine trembled and shouted as they drove the ship. The two men came atop. There seemed to be crackling and booming canvas everywhere, but there were sails that hadn't been hoisted yet. They put them up now. There were gallants to go above the top sails, there were little moon-raker sails to go above the gallants. Dana and Jack raised every piece of canvas there was, and the *Catherine* raced toppingly at great speed.

Then still faster. There was a standing wave, a traveling wave, a tidal wave of the tremors, and the *Catherine* rode it, very high and just behind the crest.

"What is the ship to you?" Jack Galopade asked Dana. "I've watched the two of you and wondered."

"She's my wife," Dana said. "I speak literally, and not as some men speak of being married to a ship. My wife has in-dwelt in this ship as her body for her purgatorial stay. She'll leave it tonight."

"She'll overshoot the grave they've named and storied for her," Jack calculated, "unless we open the scuttles very soon."

They went down into the bilges and opened the scuttles in the bottom, and the sea poured in. They went atop again.

"She'll explode just about right," Jack Galopade said, "when the sea reaches her boilers, if she doesn't topple complete first. Won't there be a bit of fun near the end though? That's really why I came, for that, and to guarantee your life."

"I suppose it'll be a bit of fun," Dana admitted, "but it looms as

mere annoyance and dirtiness now. I'll try to come into the spirit of it, and may it be high fun for you, Jack!"

"The wind and word of that man has been traveling toward us for some days," Jack said. "That man, flatfooted on the ground, is a physical coward when confronted with fist or knife. I've made him back down myself during his various stays on Basse-Terre. He must have time to puff himself up and go into transport before he'll battle. He's had that time now, though. Shall we bring another cannon to the very fore-rail? Two good men can do it the way the ship's nosing down."

They brought a second cannon to the very fore-rail and lashed it secure. It was lightning all through the jagged darkness, and the volcano was belching globs of fire. And there was another sort of light, the green fire that seemed to inhabit the waterspouts.

"He's not a long mile away," Jack Galopade cried. "He's also going before the wind. How can we both be going before the wind and we be coming together?"

Well, the wind was a swirl. The *Catherine* was out in the passage between Guadeloupe and Marie-Galante Island now. These usually calm waters had become one giant seeth. There were prodigies on sea and land, earthquake and volcanic explosion, seaquake and water-spout, running waves and clashing waves, red fire and green fire.

"I'll cannon," Jack shouted. "I can wait no longer."

"Cannon!" Dana cried. The barking thunder and shiver came immediately, and the long fiery trajectory. The *Gates of Hell*, the ship of Ifreann Chortovitch, was seen clearly for the first time; it was not two furlongs off, and was bearing down on them with roar and hoot and fire.

And the timbers of the *Catherine Dembinska* shivered with real fear. She had always been deadly afraid of this manifestation that was coming down on them.

"He'll not have you!" Dana cried. "You're clear. You go now, girl. Your time here is done. *Dia is Muire dhuit, a mhuirnin!*"

The *Catherine Dembinska* exploded under their feet. The flames ascending from her depths enriched the other flames of that stark night. But now it was only a ship afire and aburst. Catherine herself had gone out of it.

"I'll see you again, my love, in thirty years, or fifty," Dana called a loud farewell. "The time will pass quickly enough for me, and thyself are already outside of time."

And then Dana turned with savage joy to the other conflict. He cannoned, Jack Galopade cannoned, and engorged Ifreann on the

*Gates of Hell* cannoned with the only voice he now had. The ships rattled and raled and burst. And now they came nearly at point blank.

Ifreann was seen clearly now, roaring and screaming soundlessly while his throat thews stood out like ship's cables in his effort. There was something fearsome about the silent roaring of that monster as he towered and reeled among his gape-mouthed mutes. They cannoned the last time. They came to the crash, and the great bloated face and form of Ifreann was above them and illuminated with his own purple light.

"He roars and raves but he makes no sound," Jack Galopade cried. "Has he had his own tongue ripped out as has happened to his demonic and moronic crew? Has the voice of this devil been castrated?"

"I believe that I mutilated him once," Dana sang, "or that he's since mutilated himself. He's mad, he's delirious, he's hysterical, he's himself. Have at us, Ifreann! Do what you can do!" Dana himself was sounding this in clear and un mutilated voice.

This was one ending of the world, surely and for a little while, as the fountains of the deep were broken up and all the ancient islands appeared in the sky. Really, there were trees and cliffs and lands up there as the lightning showed.

It was preternatural battle there in the passage between Basse-Terre (Guadeloupe) and Marie-Galante, and each antagonist was supported by his own titans and visions; red fire coming down and green fire going up. The whole world was inverted. Even the friendly and flaming volcano, who was Dana's own uncle, seemed almost a dangerous enemy in the things it was throwing.

The *Catherine* exploded again. That was her second and last boiler. If Dana lived through this (unlikely as it seemed) he would go to Carloforte and more world-hinging adventure; and if he lived through that (all distant and impossible as it loomed) he'd come back to Angelene and Basse-Terre; in five years, or ten, he'd come back.

The deck had become intolerably hot, and indeed there was no deck left except just there at the forerail. The *Catherine* exploded again, and she hadn't any third boiler to explode. The *Gates of Hell* exploded. And Dana's last talisman was gone: this was the splinter bone from Catherine's skull that Dana had carried in the pouch around his neck; it was gone, now, and he felt its absence. He remembered; it had been gone some time before; Angelene had assumed that Catherine bone also into her belly.

There was no ship left under them, only the great suction, the reverse flow of the fountains and spouts. Dana Coscuin and Jack



Galopade with whooping joy were into the churning, spouting water with no other things than hand knives. They were sucked so deep with such rapidity that they touched very passage bottom at more than one hundred feet. Sounding younger brothers of whales they both were, and they came up with the same great rapidity. How could Dana not live through this when he had as companion the cetaceous and salty Jack Galopade complete with blow-hole in his head?

The ships had crashed and crumbled together. Ifreann Chortovitch was falling through the night, falling like bursting purpled lightning as his father had once fallen. He seemed to be all one great swollen head roaring soundlessly, and his body but a tadpole tail to him. He fell timelessly. Then the monster was into the jarring sea-quake water with a spuming crash, and the two joyous comrades were after him.

They'd flense that killer whale of an Ifreann, they'd flense him of his purpled blubber with their flensing knives. This wrong monster whale would be blubbered and peeled; they'd have the curtal-tongued abomination in the middle of the shouting sea. And then they'd strike out on the nine-mile swim to Marie-Galante Island, and from there it was but twenty-five centuries of miles to Carloforte.

Onto the devil-be-dwelled purpled whale of a man-monster then and all his mutilated power. With itching knives they followed him down into the green and swirling depths.